■ **Lifestyle / C1**

Catching up with man behind luxury label Charriol

■ **Metro / A22**

Sonny Parsons daughter kidnapped Tuesday, released yesterday

■ **Business / B1**

Ayala Corp. profit last year soared 130%

■ **News / A2**

Why Cito Lorenzo resigned all his gov't positions

■ **News / A2**

Nothing political, DOJ chief tells Gringo Honasan

Lost in translation? Try Pinoy computerese

PASOK BASURA
LABAS BASURA!

By Christian Esguerra

MY COMPUTER, my network places, system configuration, message box—do they make sense?

Now try these. "*Kom-*

LOST/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

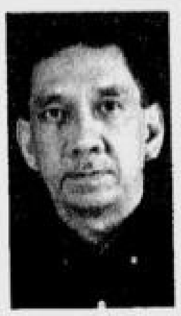
Goodbye, Louie

By Nini Valera
Entertainment

EVEN when he was just writing text messages, Louie Camino, my entertainment editor, wrote in crisp, crackling prose that would make me smile or tug at my heart.

In the last few weeks be-

GOODBYE/ A8



LOUIE C. Passion for the word

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Friday, February 18, 2005 ★★★ 78 pages 9 sections Vol. 20 No. 72 P18

website: www.inq7.net

Man confesses role in Makati bombing

A MAN involved in the deadly bus bombing on Valentines Day in Makati City came forward yesterday to give information about suspects after his conscience troubled him, police said.

Three people were killed and 103 injured when a bomb ripped through a bus in the Makati financial district on Monday. Near-simultaneous blasts killed four people and injured 42 in Davao and General Santos cities.

"He has given us a great detail" about the Makati City

MAN/ A20

GMA backs Lacson antiterror bill

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Jolene R. Bulambot

LAPU-LAPU CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo is endorsing the passage of an antiterror bill "to add more teeth to the fight against terror" and "to strengthen our internal security laws."

"Most certainly, yes, that is very important," Ms Arroyo said yesterday at the Lapu-Lapu City Hall in Cebu, when asked if she would certify as urgent a pending bill in Congress that would impose harsher penalties on terrorists and allow wiretapping of suspects' homes.

She told reporters that antiterror was part of her priority legislation: "We have not been talking about it [because] we have been concentrating on economic reforms."

Lawmakers revived their interest in the passage of an antiterror bill in the wake of the Valentine's Day bomb attacks in the cities of Makati, Davao and General Santos, for which the Abu Sayyaf had claimed responsibility.

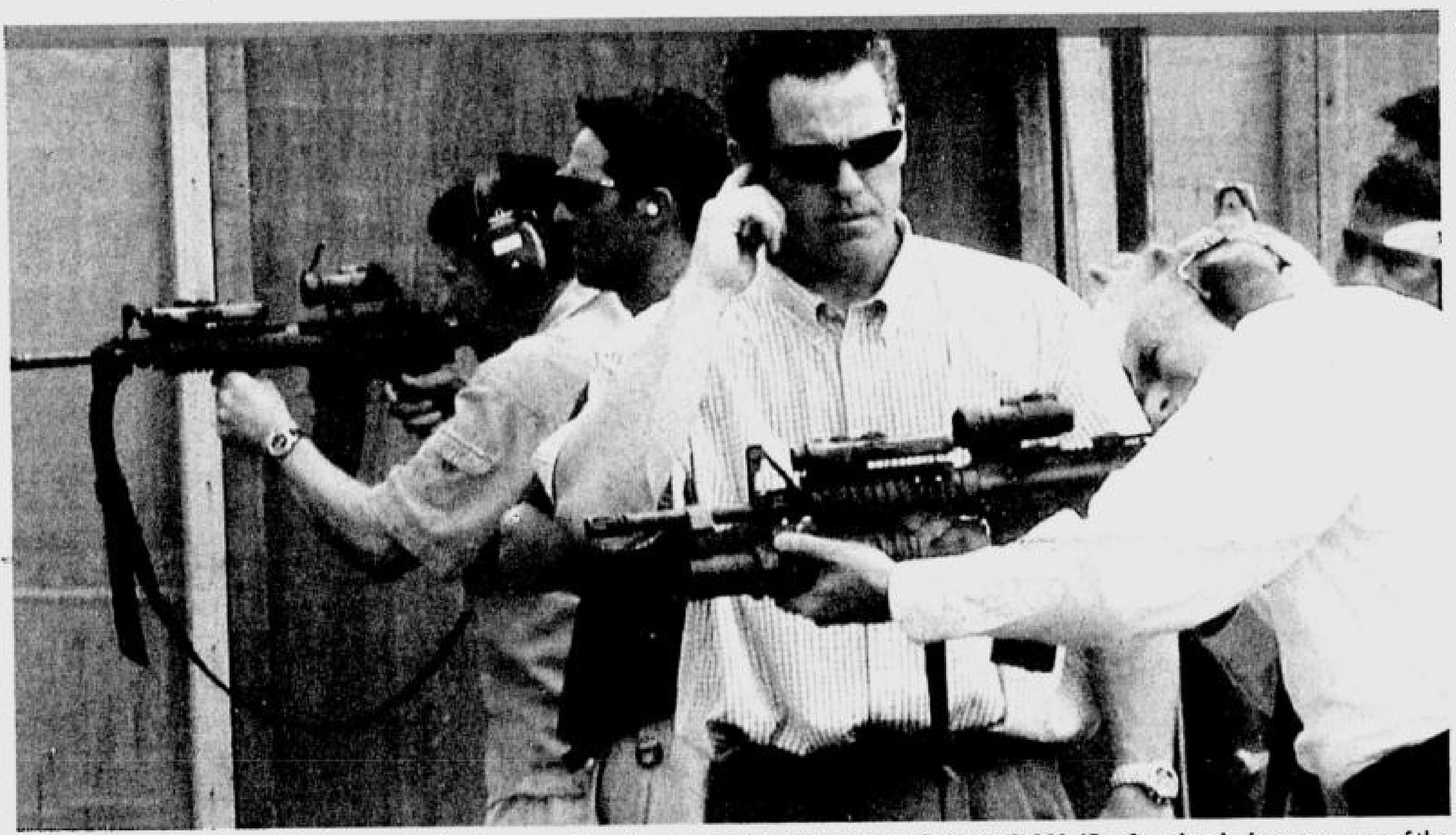
Sen. Panfilo Lacson is the author of the antiterror measure in the Senate, and Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan, in the House. National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales said Malacañang was drafting a more comprehensive version of the bill.

GMA/ A20

Moody's rating ignored

PDI PHOTO

HABIER MALIK: Why did he abandon his camp? Was he wounded? Where's he hiding now?



BULL'S-EYE. US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone practices target shooting with an American-made M4 rifle after the closing ceremony of the monthlong RP-US counternarcotics training conducted by the Joint Inter-Agency Task Force West at the Philippine Public Safety College Regional Training School in Mintal, Davao City.

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Investors buy up stocks, RP bonds

By Doris C. Dumlao
Business

PHILIPPINE shares closed at a five-year high, the peso strengthened against the dollar and Philippine dollar bonds were in demand yesterday as investors shrugged off a two-notch downgrade of the Philippines' credit rating by the US-based Moody's Investor Service.

Asserting their vote of confidence in the Philippines, foreign banks HSBC Ltd. and Standard Chartered Bank slammed the downgrade.

Their views were shared by local market players, most of whom agreed that the downgrade was too tough and that a one-notch rating cut would have been more acceptable.

As of yesterday, the peso appeared to have gotten over the downgrade, closing stronger at 54.85 to the US dollar from the 55.05 finish when the two-notch cut was announced Wednesday.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 18.51 points, or one percent, higher at 2,096.99, its best finish

MOODY'S/ A19

Religious scholar, actor-to-be lead rebels

A RELIGIOUS leader who served as a spiritual adviser to Moro rebels and a notorious bandit who dreamed of becoming a movie star were two of the key figures in the recent Sulu violence and the Valentine's Day bombings.

The religious leader is Habier Malik, whom the military has blamed for leading Moro National Liberation Front rebels in attacking an Army detachment in Sulu on Feb. 7. The ensuing gun battles left 71 people dead, including an Army battalion com-

RELIGIOUS/ A19

Jolo evacuees don't want to go home

JOLO, Sulu—Hundreds of residents sought shelter yesterday to avoid clashes between the military and fleeing Moro rebels freshly routed from their jungle headquarters here, officials said.

Five main evacuation centers had been set up, although most of the more than 25,000 people who had fled their homes over the past several days were staying with relatives and friends, said Maydelyn Malli Badjin, a social welfare officer in Sulu.

The exodus has continued despite the capture of the rebel camp in Barangay Bitan-ag on Tuesday. And the evacuees don't want to return home.

"People are just leaving their homes for their own safety" even if there is no fighting in their communities, Badjin said. "Here in Jolo, when people see soldiers coming, they just leave the place."

In the town of Patikul, Sulu, spokesperson Sabri Asri said some 25,660 villagers had evacuated their homes in Jolo as of late Wednesday, with aid workers warning that relief supplies would start running short in two weeks.

Their numbers are "still increasing," said Asri, who is helping organize relief efforts for the civilians displaced after 10 days of deadly fighting between government troops and followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

A military cargo plane delivered relief supplies to Jolo yesterday. A government team left by boat for Parang town with

JOLO EVACUEES/ A20

What 2-notch cut in credit rating means for country

By Carlito Pablo and TJ Burgonio

THE COUNTRY will pay $114 million (about P6.2 billion) in additional interest payments a year as a result of the two-notch downgrade of its sovereign credit rating by US-based Moody's Investor Service, according to Rep. Joey Salceda (Lakas-Kampi, Albay).

In contrast, interest rates for neighboring countries like Thailand, whose credit standing rating agencies classify as "investment grade," are about half that of the Philippines, Salceda said yesterday.

"What the rating agencies are saying is that in effect we're not a good client, but a bad one," the chair of the House committee on economic affairs said.

The country's debt rating with Moody's now stands four notches below the much-coveted investment grade.

Salceda said the credit downgrade would make government and private sector borrowings more costly.

He said the country would be in deeper debt because it had no choice but to continue borrowing.

The government borrows an average of $3 billion a year through the issuance of bonds in

WHAT 2-NOTCH/ A19

Senate body wants to retain 10% VAT with no exemptions

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE ways and means committee favors junking the Malacañang-proposed 12-percent value-added tax (VAT), retaining the existing 10-percent VAT on goods and services but lifting exemptions enjoyed by independent power producers, airlines, shipping companies and cooperatives.

"More or less, we will come up with a single rate, and chances are that it will be 10 percent, and lift exemptions," Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, said after eight marathon hearings that ended yesterday.

Power companies and oil firms had warned that electricity rates and fuel prices would go up if they were covered by the VAT.

This would mean a 12-percent increase in prices of petroleum products, a 20-centavo hike in public transport fares and a 5-percent per kilowatt hour (kWh) additional charge, said Finance Undersecretary Emmanuel Bonoan, who was present at the VAT hearing.

But lawyer John Joseph Magtuloy, deputy administrator of the National Electrification Administration, told the committee that the effect on power rates would be an average increase of 26-centavo per kWh across the country.

To avoid this, Sen. Joker Arroyo, vice chair of the ways and means committee, vowed to insert a provision in the final Senate version barring oil and power firms from passing on the tax to consumers.

"We cannot allow this," said Arroyo, who is counting on "majority of the senators" to back him up.

But Recto said "we've found a way of going through it to have a single rate."

He explained that the committee would draft a companion measure re-

SENATE/ A6

TECHIE. President Arroyo chats with Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz to inaugurate the multi-media GMA E-Center at the Lapu-Lapu City Hall in Cebu that interconnects national and global agencies in e-governance. Digital infrastructure is one of the President's 10-point agenda.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/18/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONTPAGE

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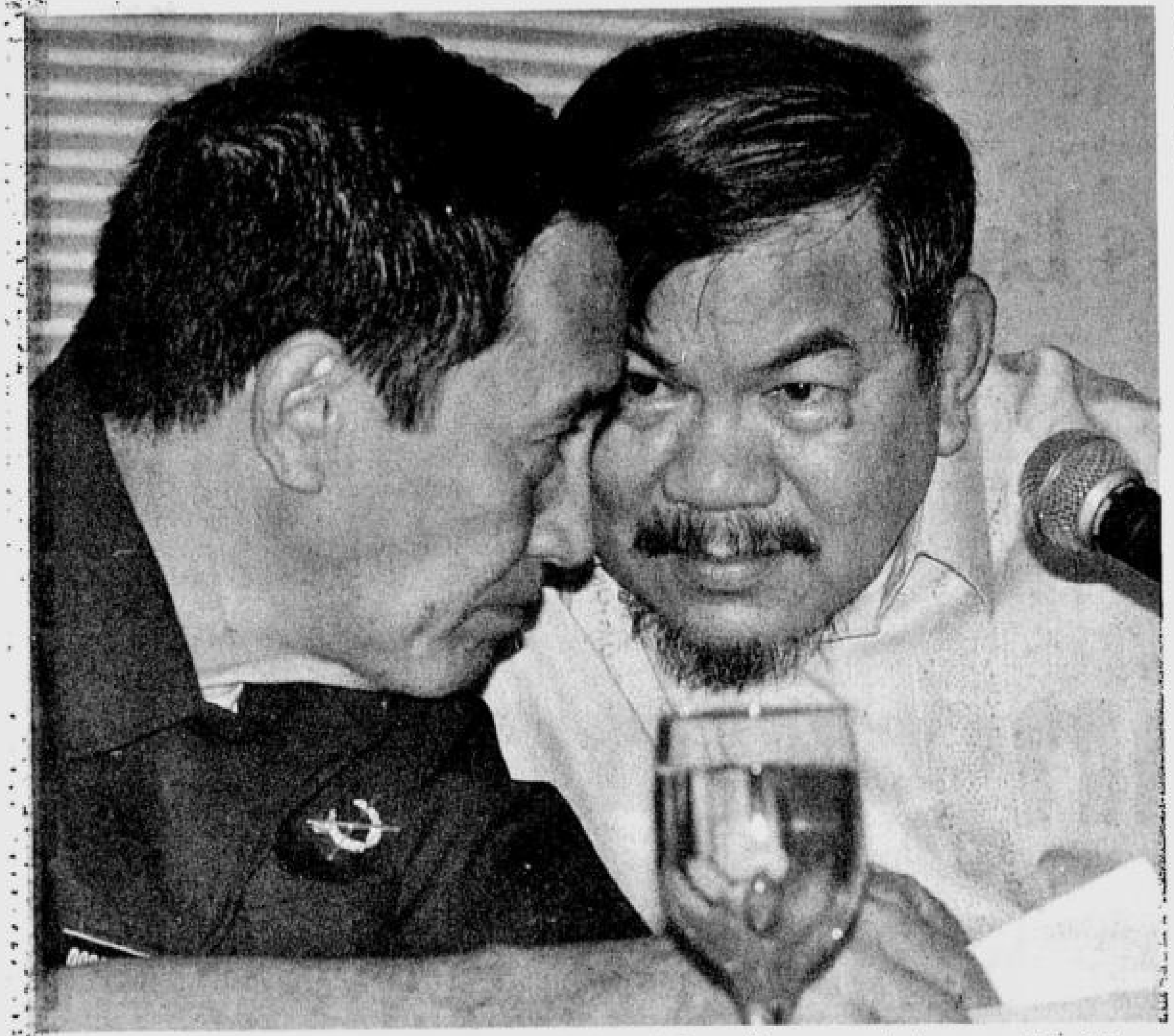
Taxman goes after Gen. Garcia



GENERAL Garcia confers with his military counsel, Antonio Doronila, at yesterday's resumption of his court-martial at Camp Aguinaldo.

JOAN BONDOC

By Michelle V. Remo and Alcuin Papa

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has served a preliminary assessment notice against Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the former military comptroller accused of amassing P143 million in ill-gotten wealth, for unpaid income taxes worth P35 million covering the years 1993 to 2003.

If the general fails to respond to the assessment notice, he will be charged with tax evasion, in addition to the court-martial and perjury cases that he already faces.

The BIR's tax fraud division said the detection of Garcia's unpaid tax liabilities was made possible by a lifestyle check on the retired Armed Forces comptroller, who also faces graft charges for his unexplained wealth.

Information on Garcia's assets was obtained through third-party information from other government agencies, such as the Registry of Deeds for his real property holdings and the Land Transportation Office for his vehicles, the BIR said.

The revenue bureau has initiated tie-ups with various government agencies to gather the data it needs for its tax audits.

Revenue officer Alex Martinez, who is investigating the Garcia case, said the retired general has been given 15 days to respond to the assessment notice which was served on Wednesday.

If he fails to respond within that period, the BIR would send him a final assessment notice or a demand letter, Martinez said.

If he fails to respond again, the BIR will be forced to file a tax-evasion case either with the justice department or the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

The BIR said it started investigating Garcia's tax-compliance record last year, shortly after the general was charged with graft.

Aside from Garcia, the BIR is also pursuing a tax-evasion case against ethnic Chinese tycoon Lucio Tan for allegedly evading payment of millions of pesos worth of taxes.

The BIR said it was working on several other tax investigations to help improve its revenue collections.

Newly appointed Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima has made the crackdown on tax evaders his priority and has called on the BIR to step up its campaign against tax evaders.

At Garcia's court-martial in Camp Aguinaldo yesterday, two Land Transportation Office officials testified concerning three vehicles owned by the general's wife which were not included in the Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) that he filed.

Preciosa Lagrimas of the LTO office in Guimaras and Cecilia Ronga of the LTO office in Iloilo presented documents from their offices on the ownership of the vehicles.

Lagrimas said a Toyota RAV 4 (with plates FEV-498) was registered at her office on Aug. 14, 2001 under the name of Clarita Garcia.

Ronga testified that two vehicles, a Honda Civic (FEC-134) and Mitsubishi L-300 van (FDZ-582), were also registered in her office under the name of Clarita Garcia.

State prosecutors claim that Garcia owns six vehicles which he did not declare in his SALN for the years 2002 and 2003.

Garcia is being tried by a military court for violations of the Articles of War for failure to declare various assets, including the cars, in his SALN. He is also facing perjury charges before the Office of the Ombudsman.

Court freezes colonel's assets

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday froze some P17 million of assets belonging to the Army's former budget officer who faces criminal charges before an anticorruption tribunal.

Lt. Col. George Rabusa, the Army's former budget officer, is accused of accumulating up to P43 million in cash and real estate despite earning a salary of just P28,000 a month.

The anti-money laundering council asked the Court of Appeals to freeze a portion of Rabusa's assets to stop him from moving or divesting cash and other financial instruments.

"We find that probable cause exists that an unlawful activity and/or money laundering offense is about to be committed," Judge Portia Alino-Hormachuelos said in a 12-page decision. The court order is effective for 20 days.

The freeze covers bank accounts, insurance policies, investments and property belonging to Rabusa, his wife and two daughters.

The court said it took note of the anti-money laundering council's claim that Rabusa's family expenses were double his declared income, rejecting the Army officer's claims that his wife had inherited a huge fortune.

Rabusa was a subordinate of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, the former financial comptroller of the Armed Forces, who himself faces military and civilian courts for unexplained wealth of up to P143 million.

The military court hearings and separate criminal cases are part of a high-profile government drive against graft. *Reuters*

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ZAMORA POBLADOR VASQUEZ & BRETAÑA
Legal Counsel of Northern Islands Co., Inc.

Why Cito resigned

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LORENZO

DID LUIS "Cito" Lorenzo resign from the Land Bank of the Philippines and Quedancor Credit Corp. to save President Macapagal-Arroyo from impeachment?

"No, Lorenzo resigned because he wanted to return to the private sector. And I don't think there is any impeachable offense in this case," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview with the INQUIRER yesterday.

Last week, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel had claimed Lorenzo's appointment was one of several impeachable offenses the President had committed and for which he asked the Philippine Constitution Association (Philconsa) to use as a basis to unseat her.

Pimentel said the respective charters of Landbank and Quedancorp stated that the finance secretary and the agriculture secretary, respectively, should be the chair of the two institutions.

Shortly after announcing Lorenzo's resignation, President Arroyo yesterday named Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima chair of Landbank and Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap chair of Quedancorp.

Bunye said even Pimentel's peers, Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Francis Pangilinan, had shrugged off the allegation that the President had abused her authority in appointing Lorenzo to the twin posts.

Aside from Lorenzo's twin appointments, Pimentel said the President could also be impeached for the illegal use of the road users' tax and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration's (Owwa) funds in the last presidential campaign; the illegal payment of $68 million (P3.762 billion) for the purchase of six search and rescue vessels for the Coast Guard without congressional authority, and the appointment of undersecretaries and assistant secretaries in excess of the number authorized by the Administrative Code.

But even before Philconsa could decide whether to take on Pimentel's challenge, the President's allies in the House of Representatives had already declared their plan to shoot down any impeachment moves against her.

Pimentel had described as *consuelo de bobo* (small consolation) Lorenzo's appointment to Landbank and Quedancorp, ruing the President's decision to remove the latter from the agriculture department where under his watch farm production reached record highs.

Lorenzo, the richest member of the Arroyo Cabinet, also resigned as presidential adviser on jobs creation, where he was supposed to create at least six million jobs during President Arroyo's term.

Erap back in hospital

By Armand N. Nocum

DISGRACED President Estrada returns today to the Cardinal Santos Medical Center for a day-long follow-up checkup after suffering a slight pneumonia last week.

The Sandiganbayan yesterday granted the request of Estrada's lawyer for another round of X-ray and blood test as requested by Dr. Cecil Tady, chief of pulmonary medicine division of the CSMC.

Justices Teresita Leonardo de Castro, Sandiganbayan presiding justice and chair of the special division, and Francisco Villaruz Jr. and Diosdado Peralta granted the request coursed through Estrada's lawyer Jose Flaminiano.

The court said Estrada, who is facing plunder and perjury charges, leaves his Tanay rest house at around 6 a.m. and returns at 5 p.m. today.

Estrada was rushed to the CSMC on Feb. 8 after he suffered fever and body aches for three days in his 14-hectare vacation house, where is now detained.

"It's not his legs. It's not related to his legs. The operation (in Hong Kong) was very successful," Estrada's doctor Lorenzo Hocson told the INQUIRER.

Hours after he was brought by helicopter to the San Juan hospital last week, doctors found that one-fourth of the 67-year-old former president's lungs "is affected with pneumonia," said Ferdie Ramos, one of Estrada's media handlers.

But Estrada was returned to Tanay three days later after his condition had improved.

Abu Sayyaf member falls

POLICE yesterday arrested a top Abu Sayyaf member believed to be involved in high-profile abductions in Basilan.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided early yesterday a house in Sapang Palay, Barangay Baliwasan, Zamboanga City and arrested Nassid Tahjid aka Rudimar Taji, who put up no resistance, said Director Vidal Querol, the Zamboanga regional police chief.

Querol said Tahjid is a suspect in the abductions of Roman Catholic priest Roel Gallardo and about 60 students and teachers at the Claret High School in Tumahubong, Basilan, on March 20, 2000.

Gallardo and several students and teachers were later killed when the military staged a rescue attempt. The priest's body was found to have torture marks.

Police have also linked Tahjid to the Abu Sayyaf siege of the St. Peter's Church and Dr. Jose Maria Torres Hospital in Lamitan on June 2, 2001. *Christian V. Esguerra and AFP*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Pinoy sentenced to 17 years for stabbing death of NY nightclub bouncer

NEW YORK—A man trained in the Filipino knife-fighting technique called "kali" was sentenced to 17 years in prison for fatally stabbing a nightclub bouncer who tried to enforce the city's indoor smoking ban.

Isaias Umali—who was convicted in November of first-degree manslaughter in the April 2003 death of Dana "Shazam" Blake—had faced up to 25 years in prison.

State Supreme Court Justice Bonnie Wittner said the six-inch (15-cm) serrated knife Umali used on Blake, 32, was "the deadliest knife I've ever seen in a courtroom. There can be no other purpose but to injure or kill somebody."

"I never intended to kill Mr. Blake or even to cause him serious injury," the 33-year-old Umali said.

The dispute in a Manhattan nightclub began when Blake told a group of Umali's friends they could not smoke. One kept puffing, and Blake grabbed him to escort him out.

During his trial, Umali testified he was afraid for the life of his friend, Jonathan Chan, because Blake had Chan's neck in his grasp.

He acknowledged stabbing Blake in the groin, piercing his femoral artery. *AP*

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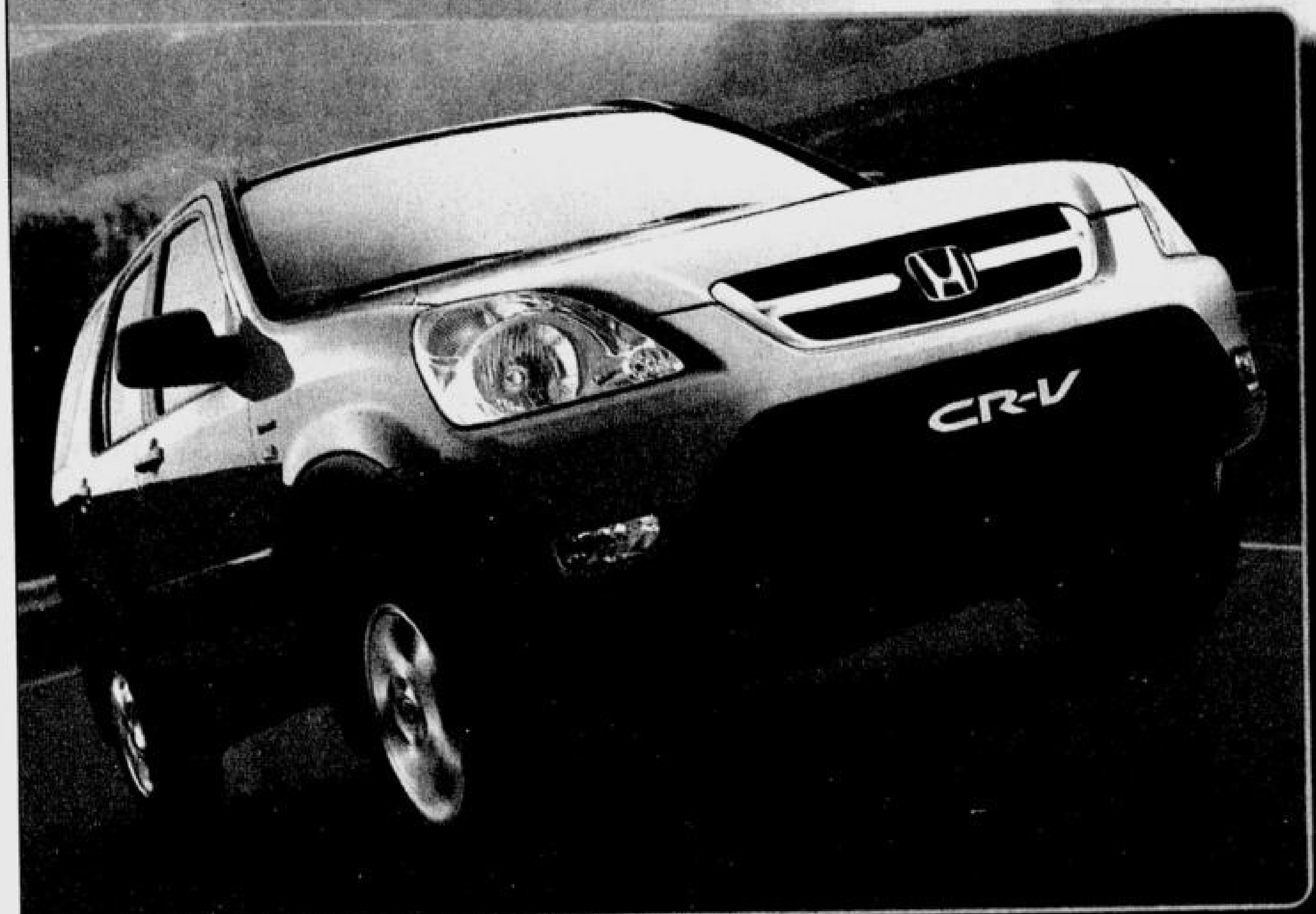

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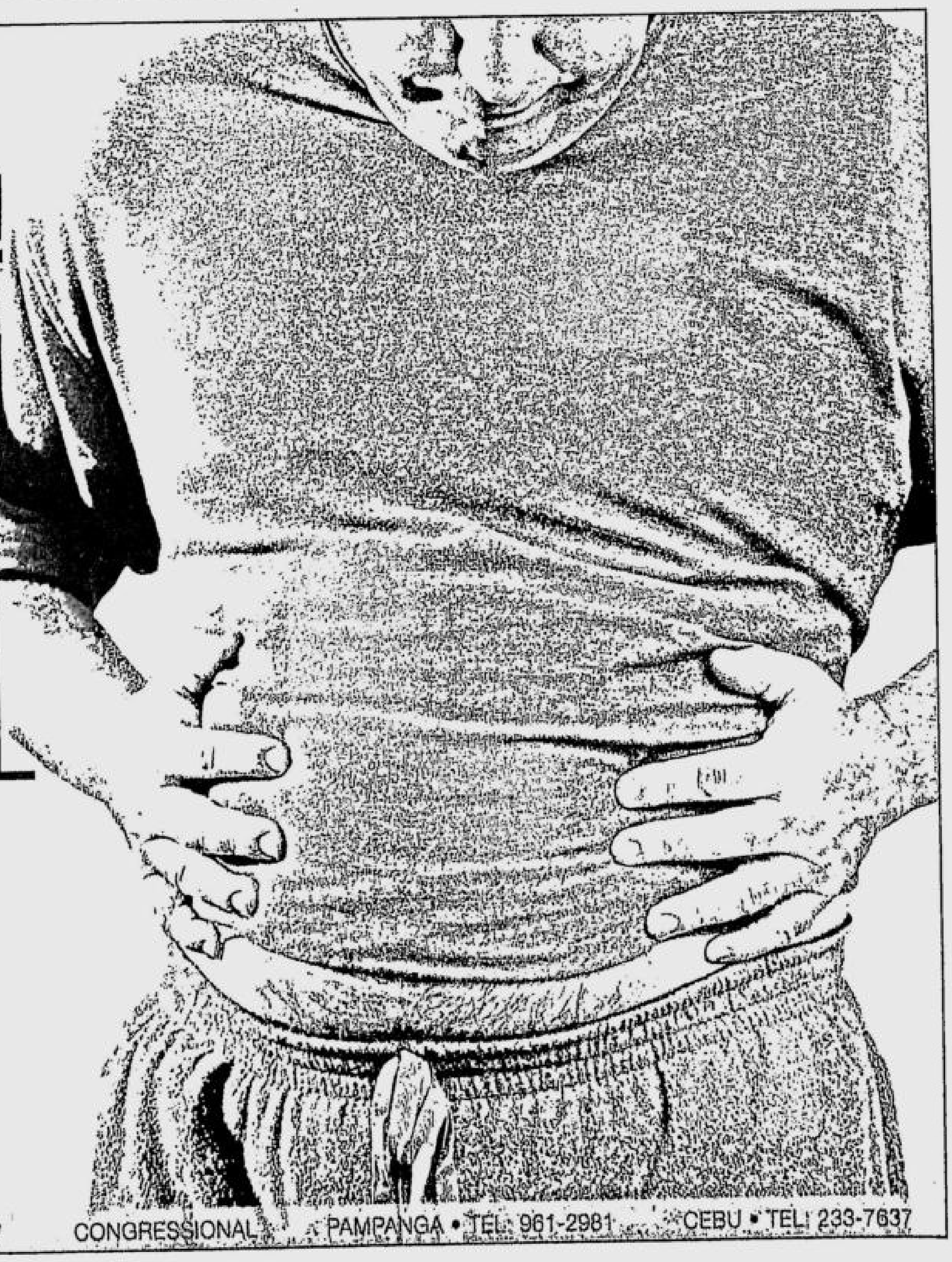

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DOJ chief to Gringo: Nothing political

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday denied that there was anything political in the justice department's move to pursue the investigation of former senator Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan for his alleged role in the July 2003 failed coup.

Gonzalez said Department of Justice prosecutors had subpoenaed Honasan because the Supreme Court twice denied his petition to have the investigation of the coup d'etat charges against him transferred to the Office of the Ombudsman.

"The SC decision has become final and executory so we cannot sit on this case anymore," Gonzalez said.

Besides, some of Honasan's co-respondents, who did not join Honasan in the SC appeal, have been asking the DOJ for a quick resolution of the case, he said.

Gonzalez said he was issuing the clarification after receiving numerous phone calls from people calling to complain against the DOJ decision to pursue the investigation against Honasan.

The DOJ panel of prosecutors, headed by Senior State Prosecutor Leo Dacera, on Tuesday ordered Honasan to appear before a hearing on Feb. 28 at the DOJ and submit his counter-affidavit and supporting evidence.

If the prosecutors find probable cause against Honasan, he will be charged before the Makati Regional Trial Court which is trying the soldiers accused of staging what has been called the Oakwood mutiny, after the Makati luxury apartments that the mutineers seized.

Honasan would have to be jailed while undergoing trial since coup d'etat is a non-bailable offense.

The Supreme Court on July 22, 2004, dismissed for the third time Honasan's petition to stop the probe into his alleged involvement in the failed coup.

The high tribunal dismissed for "lack of merit" Honasan's motion for reconsideration asking the court to set aside its April 13 ruling that upheld the DOJ's jurisdiction over the case.

When the court rejected Honasan's petition for the second time on June 18, 2004, it also noted that its April 13 ruling had become final on May 8 after Honasan failed to file a motion for reconsideration on time.

"We find no cogent reason to reverse our earlier findings that (the DOJ) has concurrent jurisdiction to conduct the preliminary investigation on the charges of coup d'etat filed against (Honasan)," the tribunal said.

The SC rejected Honasan's claim that the DOJ panel of prosecutors investigating him was biased because of statements allegedly made by President Macapagal-Arroyo and other government officials that prejudged his guilt.

The court also dismissed Honasan's contention that it should have ruled on the issue of whether or not the charge against him was committed in relation to his office.

Honasan claimed that it was the Ombudsman that had proper jurisdiction over his case since the crime he was accused of was committed in relation to his office as senator.

The SC said the issue should only be resolved after a hearing had been conducted by the DOJ, noting that Honasan had already presented evidence to support his claim that the crime charged against him was related to his being a senator.

The police filed the charges after a witness, Maj. Perfecto Ragil, claimed to have been present at a June 2003 meeting where Honasan and members of the Magdalo group of officers accused of staging the July 2003 aborted coup plotted to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In his affidavit, Ragil said Honasan told the officers at the meeting that "we must use force, violence and armed struggle to achieve the vision of the NRP."

Honasan was referring to his National Recovery Program, which the mutineers in Makati used as their "bible."

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PHILIPPINE CHARITY SWEEPSTAKES OFFICE

3 Oakwood boys cleared

By Alcuin Papa

CHARGES have been dropped against three servicemen who joined the Oakwood mutiny in 2003 for lack of evidence, as the court-martial of some 200 other soldiers continued yesterday.

At yesterday's proceedings, Army Maj. Perfecto Ragil was cleared of charges he had violated Article of War 68 or failure to suppress a mutiny, and Article of War 96 or conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Navy Seaman 2nd Class Alan Dulap and Petty Officer 3 Deodato Tolentino were cleared of violation of Article of War 63 or disrespect toward superior officers, Article of War 67 or mutiny, and Article of War 97 or conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline.

Prosecutor Capt. Candy Rivas said Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Efren Abu had ordered the charges dropped against the three. Abu is the convening authority for the court-martial of the rebellious soldiers who called themselves the Magdalo Group.

Rivas told reporters the prosecution was also planning to tap Maj. Antonio Villamin as a state witness in the court-martial. Charges against Villamin had earlier been dropped.

"The prosecution panel is considering (Villamin as a state witness)," Rivas said.

At yesterday's hearing, 50 soldiers were arraigned for violation of Article of War 96.

Some 300 junior officers and enlisted personnel are on trial for the takeover of the luxury Oakwood apartments in Makati City on July 27, 2003.

The soldiers were protesting corruption in the military and the alleged involvement of senior officers and government officials in terror attacks in Davao City earlier in the year.

Last September, six of the leaders of the group publicly apologized to President Macapagal-Arroyo and retracted their accusations. Nevertheless, their court-martial and a separate case before a civilian court are continuing.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, February 18, 2005
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading:	**Ezk 18:21-28**
Gospel:	**Mt 5:20-26**

Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you, that if you are not righteous in a much broader way than the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

"You have heard that it was said to our people in the past: Do not commit murder; anyone who does kill will have to face trial. But now I tell you: whoever gets angry with a brother or sister will have to face trial. Whoever insults a brother or sister deserves to be brought before the council; whoever calls a brother or a sister 'Fool' deserves to be thrown into the fire of hell. So, if you are about to offer your gift at the altar and you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with him, and then come back and offer your gift to God.

"Don't forget this: be reconciled with your opponent quickly when you are together on the way to court. Otherwise he will turn you over to the judge, who will hand you over to the police, who will put you in jail. There you will stay, until you have paid the last penny."

Commentary

We are comforted: if we who are sinners, turn and start to observe and practice the decrees of God that are right and just, then we will live. And we are told realistically that if we don't turn then we will be charged with what we have done and the consequences of our actions will be death. And we are told that if we have done what is righteous and then turn from God and do evil, then we will be judged accordingly. God is the God of life and wants us to live, but it is we who do evil and bring death upon ourselves. We must choose. Today and everyday, in each action and word, Jesus is clear. We must be truthful and without violence in our words, our thoughts and our actions. We cannot lie, plot revenge, murder, and allow others to be killed or encourage others in violence or humiliate anyone. If we do we cannot approach God or the altar of God. We must make peace with one another before we expect to know the peace of our God. O God, you are Justice. Be justice for us and call us to account so that others may know your presence among us. Do not let us continue in our sin but turn our hearts and ways to doing justice in the world. Amen.

Claretian Publications Inc., 8 Mayumi St., UP Village, Diliman, Quezon City, UP P.O. Box 4, Diliman, 1101 Quezon City; Tel.: 921-3984; Fax: 921-7429; E-mail: cci@claret.org; Websites: http://www.bible.claret.org (Claretian Publications Inc.) & http://missionaries.claret.org (Claretians in the Philippines)

SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

LABOR LAW (LABOR RELATIONS LAW)—**Discrimination and bad faith**—Discrimination is the unequal treatment of employees, which is proscribed as an unfair labor practice by Art. 248(e) of the Labor Code. It is the failure to treat all persons equally when no reasonable distinction can be found between those favored and those not favored. Bad faith has been defined as a state of mind affirmatively operating with furtive design or with some motive of self-interest or ill will or for an ulterior purpose. It implies a conscious and intentional design to do a wrongful act for a dishonest purpose or moral obliquity. In the case at bar, bad faith and discrimination on the part of petitioner are profusely perceived from its actions. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Chico-Nazario, Second Division, Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. vs Gramaje, G. R. No. 156963, November 11, 2004] BY R. B. VERA

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Sangkatutak Na Saya Na May Kasunod Pa!

Senate body wants to retain 10% VAT with no exemptions

From page A1

ducing the excise taxes slapped on oil and petroleum products.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo said she would push aggressively for the increase in the VAT rate even if it meant going against the wishes of Filipinos who voted for her in last year's presidential elections.

Ms Arroyo said her backing of the VAT rate hike and her other fiscal reform measures were responsible for keeping the stock market and peso exchange rate resilient despite the two-notch downgrade of the country's credit rating by the US-based Moody's Investor Service.

"I am sorry but if we do not raise P80 billion from legislative measures and P100 billion from administrative measures, we will not be able to fund all the things that Cebu needs and Cebu is one of the biggest beneficiaries of our infrastructure program," the President said when asked if she would heed the clamor of most Cebuanos (who gave the President the biggest number of votes) to drop the VAT rate hike.

The VAT rate hike is expected to generate at least P40 billion in new revenues but this measure has been widely opposed because of its impact on the prices of basic goods and services.

Mere nudge

At the hearing, incoming Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima appealed to senators to push through with the 2-percentage point increase in the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent.

"A mere nudge and we will fall [into the precipice]," Purisima said.

He explained that retaining the present 10-percent VAT rate would "make it more difficult for us to consolidate our fiscal situation as quickly as possible" and "delay our ability to upgrade our credit rating."

Purisima warned that the country was already in "a situation in which our debt levels are simply too high and, therefore, we need to come up with a program so that our debt levels in relation to gross domestic products will go down."

No overnight solution

He agreed with Recto that there were inefficiencies in the tax collection system (about 30 percent tax leakage) "but you cannot solve it overnight."

"This is a long process and we simply have to live with the facts and the cards that we'll deal with. We hope to raise about P58 billion and the key part of that will have to be an increase from 10 to 12 percent for VAT," he said.

But Purisima favored the lifting of the VAT exemptions and the proposal of Recto to increase the excise tax on luxury items and put a cap on the crediting of VAT by companies enjoying zero-rated VAT (they are included in the VAT net but are entitled to get a refund later through tax credits).

Arroyo reminded Purisima to be cautious in pleasing credit rating firms and international lending institutions.

"In my simple mind, every time Malacañang tells us we need the cash, [it says], 'Don't think of tomorrow, think of today,'" Senator Arroyo said.

"From where we sit we think of the stability of the country. The administration we are part of is not exactly a popular one. We can only go so far," he said.

Draft report

Recto told reporters during a break that the committee had already drafted a report to be presented to 17 senator-members during an executive meeting Monday.

"We do have a draft committee report. We're just verifying certain data from the Department of Finance and National Economic and Development Authority. Easily at any give time, we can report this out, but we'd rather wait for the House to pass it because constitutionally it has to come from them," he said.

The House of Representatives has yet to approve a measure lifting the VAT exemptions. Earlier, the House passed House Bill No. 3555 seeking to increase the VAT rate by 2 percentage points.

Since the proposed measure will modify only one law—the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997—the Senate will incorporate the two House measures into one.

Package of measures

He said the Senate's answer to the cash-flow problem of the Arroyo administration was not only the lifting of the VAT exemptions, but also a package of measures including the lowering of the excise tax, income tax relief to individual earners and raising corporate income taxes from 32 percent to 35 percent.

"The net effect is still you generate P60 to P70 billion for the government. That's more than what they ask for," said Recto. "That's why I'm presenting a package. I've tested this report already on a few colleagues and many of them agree that we have a good package." *With reports from Heidi Lenffer and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Lost in translation? Try Pinoy computerese

From page A1

piyuter ko," "*pook*-network *ko*," "*kumpigurasyon ng sistema*" and "*kahon ng mensahe*."

Believe it or not, Filipino translation of common computer terminologies will soon be available for the local computer community, courtesy of a new project by software giant Microsoft Corp.

The company is coming up with a "community glossary" to lure more Filipinos—the "non-techies" especially—into using computers.

Preserving Filipino

Soon, most transactions will be done online and nobody can afford to be left out, explained Joey Gurango, who is in charge of managing the glossary in the Microsoft system.

The idea is to make the ordinary Filipino understand computer terms, he said.

This way, "we will be preserving the Filipino language and culture in this age of computers," Mark Yambot, Microsoft corporate affairs director, said at a press conference yesterday.

The program actually arrived late in the country. Filipinos are good English speakers anyway, so why come up with a local translation, program developers thought.

Long translations

But now that it's here, will anybody prefer Filipino terminologies? For one, translations are long.

In the Microsoft glossary, "all caps" is "*lahat malaki titik.*" "Bullet" is "*panghanay.*" "Internet access provider" is "*tagasustento ng akses sa* Internet." "System administrator" is "*tagapangasiwa ng sistema.*" Whew!

Poet Virgilio Almario (aka Rio Alma), the man tasked with doing the translations, doesn't mind. While Filipino terms are intrinsically longer, the priority is to "explain" computer terms based on standard English, he said.

"This is not a purist translation," Almario told reporters. "What we want to do is to explain computer terms to ordinary users and make things easier for them."

Just an alternative

Don't fear, too. Filipino would only be an alternative—not a replacement—for a computer user's language.

"When you introduce this, it doesn't mean that you're diminishing the other. We're just providing an alternative," Gurango explained.

One study involving University of the Philippines high school students tends to prove that when it comes to the medium of learning, Filipino is still best for Filipinos.

The experiment divided students into two focus groups—one studying in English, the other in Filipino.

"At the start, both groups were pretty much equal," Almario recalled. "But later, the group using Filipino began to perform better (in academics)."

Pedagogy principle

Almario cited the "universal principle in pedagogy" as a reason. When one uses the language closest to his native tongue, he learns better.

The same principle should apply in the community glossary set to be available online by June, he said.

The program is not exclusively for Microsoft users and its affiliates. Anybody may access the glossary, sort of an online dictionary, to check Filipino translations.

Depending on the success of the project, Yambot said software companies might later introduce programs written in Filipino. Imagine working on Pagemaker, Photoshop or Freehand in the native tongue.

UP 10-man team

Almario and his 10-man team from UP spent three months translating at least 5,000 of some 8,000 common computer terms based on standard English.

Part of the team were two college students who would update the rest on the latest terminologies in the ever-evolving Filipino language.

Translating wasn't exactly difficult since the group referred to the pioneering UP dictionary of standard Filipino, Almario said. There's also the UP manual for editing in Filipino.

Standard terms

What's important, he said, was to come up with "standard" computer terminologies in Filipino, one that would endure even if occasionally adulterated by users.

For most terms, Almario and his team found translations, either in English or Spanish, the other foreign language that heavily influenced Filipino. For others, they simply had to keep the original.

While "log-off" can be "*lumabas*, "keyboard" is "*teklado*" and "tabs stop" is "*hinto* tab," there's simply no better substitute for "mouse." One wouldn't want to call it "*daga*," right?

Funny

"*Burador*" is the Filipino for "draft," but Almario said the English original was fine. So is "save."

So don't worry. The translations may be funny, if not ridiculous. But you'll soon be getting the hang of it. Just don't press the "*lumabas*" button too quickly.

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'I value my profession so much'

INQUIRER Entertainment Editor Louie C. Camino died on Wednesday at the Lourdes Hospital in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

He was 52.

His remains lie at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels on Sucat Road in Parañaque.

Interment is tentatively set for Monday.

Biggest strength

In his application for employment at the INQUIRER in 1995, he wrote that his biggest strength as a journalist was his "love for the profession. That also happens to be what I consider my main asset as a person, I value my profession so much that it always affects my private life..."

Louie joined the INQUIRER as night editor after a year as sub-editor at the Hong Kong Standard. He was City Editor until 2000. He became editor of both the Metro and Entertainment sections until 2003, and was entertainment editor until he died.

Louie was also a former managing editor of People's Taliba and news editor of People's Journal.

A full Gerry Roxas scholar, he worked toward a degree in BS General (pre-medicine) at the University of Santo Tomas College of Science. But his love for writing prevailed. Whether he was writing or editing news stories or flamboyant pieces about show biz celebrities, Louie's passion for the written word was palpable.

He won the Best Feature Story award in the 1982 Catholic Mass Media Awards.

Goodbye, dear Louie

From page A1

fore he died on Wednesday night at the Lourdes Hospital in Sta. Mesa, Manila, Louie sent me tons of text messages pouring his heart out about his struggle to remain alive.

One of these messages said: "My session with the doctor today went on for two hours with the doctor telling me that it would be good for me to be surrounded by family and friends. I listened, sobbing. This is a very lonely disease. These are my thoughts for today. I am sorry I imposed them on you."

Recently, he fell into the habit of asking me to bake for him bread and cook for him vegetarian *empanadita* "that tastes like the beef rendang you brought to the office once."

I warned him that the empanaditas might be oily.

But he said, with his customary wit, "A little amount of oil would not kill me now."

Eating like a bird

Even when he was healthy, Louie ate like a bird. But he had a sweet tooth and had wanted to eat ice cream on the day he died. He had sent text messages to other friends asking them to buy ice cream for him.

On the week of Chinese New Year, when he was confined at the Metropolitan Hospital in Sta. Cruz, Manila, because of a blood clot in his leg, he sent another text message, asking me for hats and more bread.

Falling hair

"My hair has fallen. I am having my head shaved and I am crying. Hair all over the place. I don't want you to see me like this. Just ask your driver to bring them here. I will eat the bread for lunch."

Later, another text message arrived: "The hats are very nice. Send me the bill."

He wore one of these hats—a blue bonnet embroidered with "Australia"—until his last night, and told his sister-in-law not to remove it because he did not want his hairline to show. He was still wearing the blue bonnet while he was on life support and up to the time that he breathed his last.

Clotheshorse

That Louie was vain was no secret to his close friends.

He was a clotheshorse and always wore nicely pressed pants and shirts. He bragged about doing the ironing himself. He also had a fondness for white outfits and shoes because "I always wanted to be a doctor." He became a writer instead.

Hated being snooty

Louie grew up in Manila and attended public schools until high school. He told me tales about how as a child he had helped his mother sell native cakes and how he wore *bakya* (wooden slippers) while plying the streets with his goods.

He went to UST for college, and last year, he told me he wanted to study again—in La Salle. But he was probably only joking, especially about the La Salle bit. He hated being snooty.

Next to my mother, Louie was always the first to pass judgment on whoever I was dating. In the 20 years that I had known him, he never seemed to miss singling out the cad, the rat or the jerk. He also saw me through the bitter end of various entanglements, and grieved with me over bottles of beer at a Malate bistro until our eyes hurt from the first rays of the sun.

This was in the '80's when we spent the best time of our friendship working at People's Journal and People's Tonight.

So lonely in Hong Kong

We lost touch for a few years when he left for Hong Kong in the '90's to work at the Hong Kong Standard, and I had gone to Singapore for a job in an advertising agency.

In one of my trips back to Manila, I learned that he had returned after a year overseas and was then Night Editor of the Philippine Daily Inquirer. We spoke for about two hours on the phone.

"This job suits me," he said. "I am a night person. I didn't like working abroad. I was so lonely in Hong Kong. I am not for that kind of life."

Real writing

In May 2000, I settled back in Manila and worked in an advertising agency when Louie called.

"Would you like to go back to real writing?" he asked.

"How many commercials can you write that would give you the satisfaction of a byline? None, I'm sure."

"Didn't you like that TV commercial with Kris Aquino saying 'shoeses?' I wrote that one," I bragged. "I like doing that too."

"But that is not the way you should write," he said.

"*Sayang* (wasted) *ka sa* advertising."

Ferragamo shoes

I told him that the pay was good. He countered with his take on my life: "How many more pairs of Ferragamo shoes do you need to buy?"

One night over two bottles of red wine, as we reminisced about the fun we had in the '80's, he brought up again the idea of my working at the INQUIRER. He even bought a rose from a street vendor and gave it to me with a dedication that again showed how good he was with words.

Louie wrote, referring to a certain poet in my distant past: "Roses and poetry fade. You don't."

"Okay, I'll work with you at the INQUIRER," I told him the next day.

For almost five years, Louie guided my writing and editing for the Metro and Entertainment sections of the INQUIRER. He was the first to praise a good piece—respecting my copy and never tampering with my style lest he cramp it. He was the first to point out that in writing, the possibilities are limitless when crafting good copy, giving more satisfaction to the writer than a script for 30 glorious seconds of a TV commercial.

THE METRO/ENTERTAINMENT sections in 2002 led by its editor Louie Camino (seated). Behind him, clockwise, are Leah Salterio, Marinel Cruz, Eric Olona, Margaux Ortiz and Nini Valera. PDI PHOTO

Louie insisted that a writer does not have to be mean to or be cutting about his subject—especially in entertainment stories where the rule of rumor prevails—to be able to write a good story.

Issues-oriented

There is such a thing, he said, as issues-oriented entertainment writing.

"We just happen to have movie stars as our subjects," he told me once in his gentle manner. "They are just people like us. Long after the stars had gone, we would still be here writing about people like them."

Last Tuesday, a day before he died, Louie and I still talked about writing.

"How about writing an opinion piece on the Hot Babes going topless in a fashion show?" he suggested. "But go now. Go for your own good. You might catch this," referring to the tuberculosis, which he contracted as a result of weakened lungs.

It touched me that he still worried about my health even when he could hardly breathe. Among his last words to me had to do with a writing assignment even when he was gasping for air.

But that's Louie—always thinking about stories to write and people to interview. Even while he was in hospital, he would open his computer and edit stories. He talked of working every single day, even when he was already in pain, as if writing was the only way he could live. For it is in writing crisp, crackling, witty prose with a compassionate view of the human condition, that Louie could remain alive—always.

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NEWSBRIEFS

RP safe, tourists told

THE PHILIPPINES is safe and there's no reason to avoid it. This was the assurance from Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano to travelers amid security concerns triggered by a series of bombings last Valentine's Day. Durano said security arrangements with the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police remain in place to ensure the safety of domestic and foreign tourists. "The Philippines remains a safe destination for travel. The Valentine's Day bombing incidents, while unfortunate, are clearly isolated," he said in a statement. Durano said the DOT had stepped up its coordination with the PNP's Bantay Turista, the Philippine Navy's Task Group Stingray and industry stakeholders to make sure that the systems and procedures were ready to protect tourists. *Jerome Aning*

New airport carts

A LOCAL food chain has donated 1,000 baggage carts for the use of passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Centennial Terminal II in response to the appeal of Manila International Airport Authority Director General Alfonso Cusi. This after a growing number of passengers had complained about the old and dilapidated baggage carts, most of which had become unserviceable. The new carts from China are the same type used in the airports in Hong Kong and neighboring countries. They are made of sturdy stainless steel with brakes for easy handling. The Miaa had removed the rental fee for the carts, which was the source of funds for their maintenance. With the funds gone, many of the baggage carts had become dilapidated and unusable.

Roger Margallo

Sun probe pressed

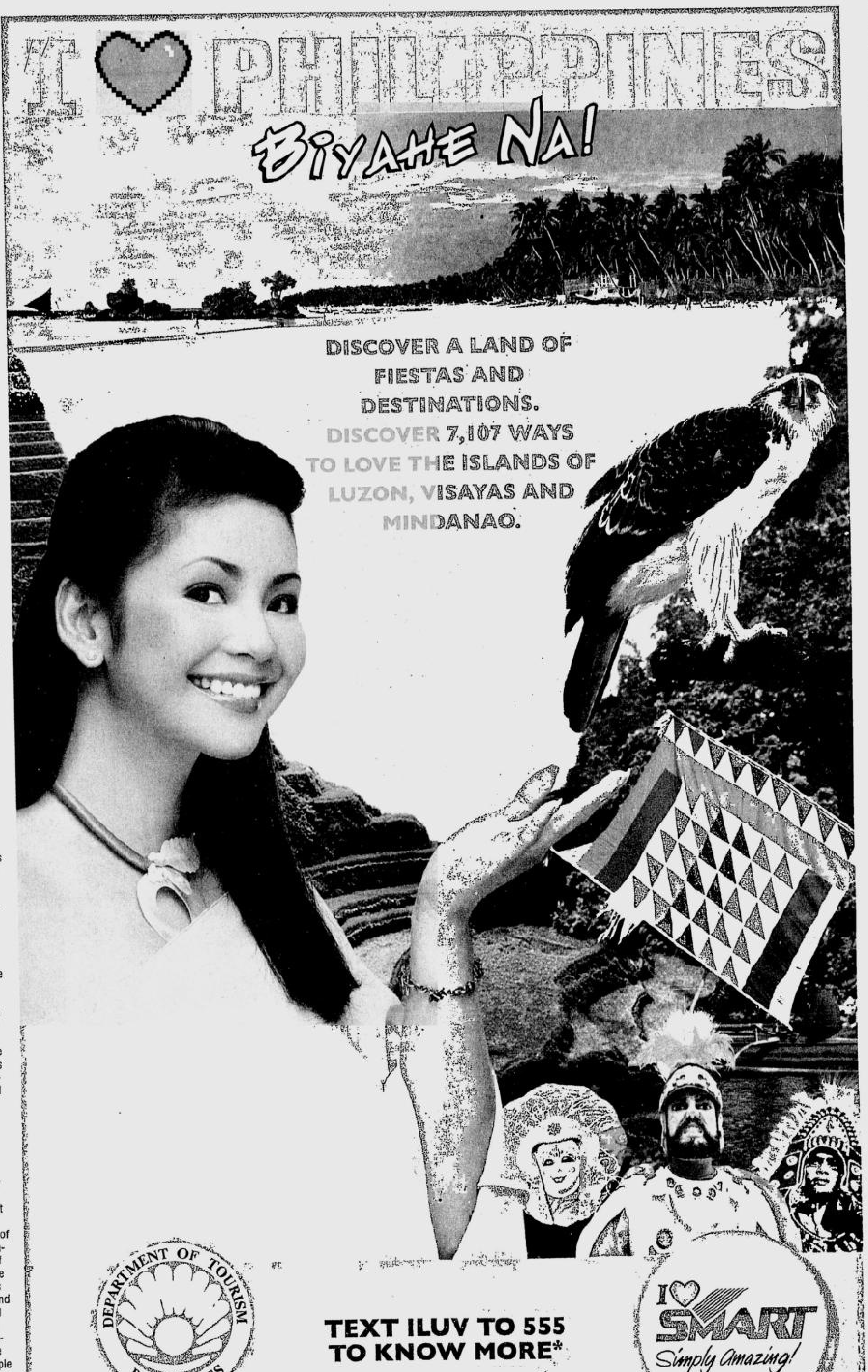
REP. Marcelino Libanan has called on the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) to take into account the interest of the public in investigating charges that Sun Cellular has been providing substandard mobile phone service to its clients. The congressman said complaints that Sun Cellular had a connection rate of only 38 percent and that it automatically drops the calls when they reach the 15-minute mark should be immediately addressed by the NTC without fear or favor. "I understand that the NTC standard is for all telecom firms to have at least a 93-percent success connection rate on the first try. If it is true that Sun Cellular's connection rate is well below this requirement, then the NTC is duty-bound to impose sanctions on the erring party since we cannot allow a telecom firm to be exempted from the rules and regulations that govern the sector," Libanan said in a press statement. The company is facing complaints before the NTC for unveiling a new call rate charging system without letting it pass the required processes at the NTC and of "predatory pricing" under its unlimited "24/7" promotional campaign.

Grassroots mining

A GROUP of church and environmental organizations is holding a three-day conference next week in Boac, Marinduque, to provide a venue for communities to share experiences and gains in facing mining issues as the government steps up its campaign to lure foreign mining corporations into the country. Organizers of the First National Grassroots Mining Conference to be held on Feb. 24-26 hope the event would also help jump-start a concerted effort among communities to address their mining concerns in the face of the revitalization plans by the government. More than 150 participants from communities with existing mining claims and activities, mostly those within the 23 priority mining projects identified by the government, and partner communities of various non-government organizations are expected to attend the conference. Leading the presentation of case studies is the province of the Marinduque, the site of a massive tailings spill in 1996 which is largely considered the worst mining-related disaster in the Philippine history, according to organizers.

Festival of twins

A WHOLE afternoon of fun and excitement awaits the participants of the second year celebration of the Festival of Twins and Multiple Births tomorrow at the Rajah Sulayman Park (Bay Walk) on Roxas Boulevard in Manila. After the successful event last year, the first to be held here in the Philippines wherein more than 200 pairs of twins and 13 sets of triplets joined the parade at WOW Philippines in Intramuros, organizers expect a bigger delegation of twins and multiple births this time from all over the country. Besides the ceremonial parade, festivities include games, raffles, talent and puppet shows and other fun activities for participants. Organizers will also officially launch the Association of Twins and Multiple Births, whose task is to spearhead the annual event. Organizers said they also hope to raise funds to assist the less privileged twins and multiple births in the country. The association officers are Dr. Rolando Sarreal, chair and twin participant last year; Natalie Palanca, president and head organizer; Dr. Rebecca Singson, vice president and mother of twins; Arah Burgos, secretary, PR consultant and organizer; Orlando Sarreal, treasurer and twin participant; Benjamin Santillan, auditor and director of Pro-Life Phils.; and Miguel and Martin Manese, public relations officers and twin participants.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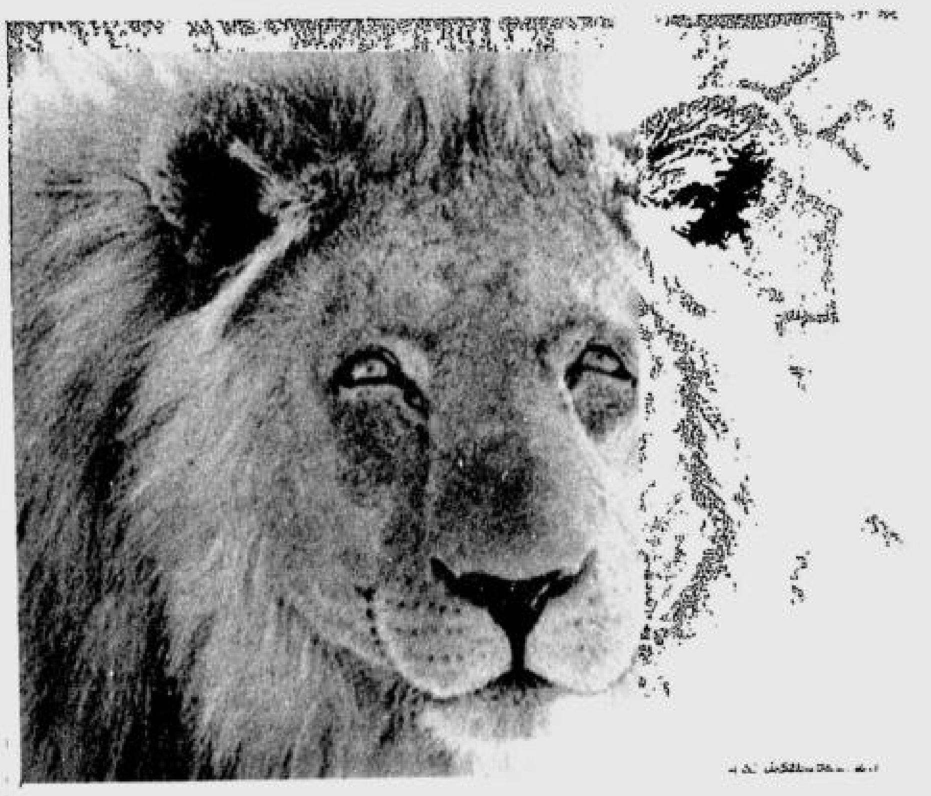

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Lebanon pressed to find Hariri killers

BEIRUT—Lebanon was under mounting pressure Thursday to solve the murder of former billionaire premier Rafiq Hariri after his funeral which saw hundreds of thousands of mourners vent their anger at Syria.

"There needs to be an international investigation," US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said at a Senate hearing after Washington recalled its ambassador to Syria over the killing.

French President Jacques Chirac, in Beirut to pay his condolences, demanded that "light be shed" on the killing of his close friend Hariri, whose motorcade was blown up in a huge explosion Monday in central Beirut.

Another 14 people were also killed in the attack which raised the specter of a return to civil strife 15 years after Lebanon's civil war and stoked tensions with Beirut's political masters in Damascus.

Lebanon's opposition has openly charged that the Beirut authorities and Damascus were involved in the killing and the local press said Thursday the massive turnout at the funeral was a clear vote of no-confidence in the pro-Syrian regime.

Hariri's funeral represented "the largest referendum for unity and sovereignty" in Lebanon, the top-selling An-Nahar newspaper said.

"The reality they (the government) should ponder is that Hariri's funeral turnout was a massive, popular vote of no-confidence in the government. Damascus should also take the heed of what is a poignant message," the English-language Daily Star said.

"What is happening in Beirut has a very recent precedent—of sorts of Kiev, after a popular protests late last year forced a re-running of flawed elections in the Ukraine," it said.

"The funeral... could very well be the catalyst for a similar process in Lebanon," it said.

Lebanon decided Wednesday to seek the help of Swiss experts specialized in explosives and DNA to probe the killing of Hariri, the five-time prime minister regarded as the architect of the country's post war reconstruction.

Lebanon's Interior Minister Suleiman Franjieh has rejected calls for an international inquiry but not ruled out a role for foreign expertise from "neutral countries."

And a state department official said Rice was not, at this point, going beyond a UN Security Council move to ask Secretary General Kofi Annan to report on the "circumstances, causes and consequences" of the killing.

Since the outbreak of its 1975-1990 civil war, Lebanon has a long list of unresolved political assassinations, many of them in similar circumstances to the killing of Hariri.

France and the United States sponsored a Security Council which in September called for Syria to withdraw its troops deployed in Lebanon. *AFP*

CANDLE illuminates the picture of Hariri during a demonstration in a refugee camp south of Gaza Strip, Feb. 16. REUTERS

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Italian journalist begs for life; Iraqi pols jockey for jobs

BAGHDAD—A female Italian journalist held hostage by militants in Iraq made a heart-rending plea for her life in a videotape, as Iraqi politicians jockeyed for position in the new government.

US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told the US Congress that Iraqi security forces could be ready in less than two years to take over from US forces, but declined to estimate the size of the insurgency facing US and Iraqi forces in Iraq.

And violence went on unabated north of Baghdad, clashes and attacks killing scores of civilians, security forces and rebels.

Two Lebanese businessmen kidnapped in Baghdad in late December were also set free Wednesday after 49 days in captivity, government sources in Beirut said.

They named the freed pair as Hassan Haydar and Ghazi Haydar, but gave no details of their release.

Giuliana Sgrena, a 56-year-old Italian reporter kidnapped two weeks ago, appeared in a video broadcast on Italian television and called on her government to withdraw its troops from Iraq.

"Withdraw from Iraq, this people must not suffer any longer... No one must come to Iraq anymore... do something for me, put pressure on the government so they withdraw their troops," she said.

Looking tired and drawn, Sgrena made her plea with an inscription in red Arabic letters stating "Mujahedeen without borders," a previously unheard of group.

Even as the video of the veteran journalist was beamed around the world, the Italian Senate overwhelmingly voted in the extension of the Italian military presence in the war-torn country.

But France's Foreign Minister Michel Barnier said hopes had been sparked that a French reporter who disappeared in Iraq more than a month ago would eventually be found.

"We've had indications that have given us hope that they will one day come back. That's all I can say," Barnier told France Inter radio.

No news has been had of Florence Aubenas, a senior correspondent for the left-leaning newspaper Liberation, and her Iraqi interpreter Hussein Hanun al-Saadi since they left her Baghdad hotel on Jan. 5. *AFP*

Scientists find dramatic changes in Southern Ocean

HOBART, Australia—Scientists have discovered dramatic changes in the temperature and salinity of deep waters in the Southern Ocean that they warned Thursday could have a major impact on global climate.

Expedition leader Steve Rintoul of Australia said his multinational team of researchers had found that waters at the bottom of the Southern Ocean were significantly cooler and less salty than they were 10 years ago.

He said the size and speed of the changes surprised scientists, who have long believed deep ocean waters underwent little temperature change, and could indicate a slowdown in the flow of deep water currents.

"Ocean circulation is a big influence on global climate, so it is critical that we understand why this is happening and why it is happening so quickly," Rintoul said after he and his team docked at Hobart on the Australian island state of Tasmania.

"The surprise was just how rapidly the deepest parts of the ocean are changing, at depths of four or five kilometers below the sea surface," Rintoul said.

"Whether it's a natural cycle that takes place over many decades, or it's climate change, it's an indication that the deep ocean can respond much more rapidly to changes that are happening near the surface than we believed possible," he said.

The expedition sampled 3,000 kilometers of the Southern Ocean basin during an eight-week expedition aboard the Australian Antarctic Division's research ship Aurora Australis. *AFP*

Scientists create first map of genetic variation

WASHINGTON—Scientists have taken a major step in the hunt for disease-causing genes by creating the first map of common human genetic variation—patterns of tiny but potentially powerful DNA differences.

The research, to be made public Thursday at a scientific meeting and in the journal Science, is essentially a first draft. A more detailed version is expected later this year.

The map "will provide an invaluable resource for genetic research to improve human health," Science's editor in chief, Donald Kennedy, said in a statement.

Even unrelated people share DNA that is 99.9 percent similar. The last remaining bit is crucial because variations within it can determine traits, from hair color and risk of heart disease to people's response to different medications.

Until now, most genetics breakthroughs have come in diseases where a big mutation in a single gene causes illness.

But the most common health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes or depression, are caused by complex interactions between numerous genes and environmental or behavioral risk factors. Finding genetic culprits under those conditions is even more laborious.

The most common type of genetic variation is like a spelling error. DNA is made up of precise orders of chemicals identified with the letters A, T, C or G. When one of those letters gets out of order, it is called a single-nucleotide polymorphism—a SNP, pronounced "snip. Each tiny difference may have profound effects.

In the new research, scientists at Perlegen Sciences Inc. of Mountain View, Calif., examined the DNA of 71 Americans of European, African or Chinese ancestry.

Researchers identified 1.58 million SNPs, most of them shared across the three populations, according to the findings being presented at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The map does not say which SNPs cause various physical or disease-related traits. But it provides genetic signposts to help other scientists more quickly answer those questions, Perlegen's lead researchers, David R. Cox and David A. Hinds, conclude. *AP*

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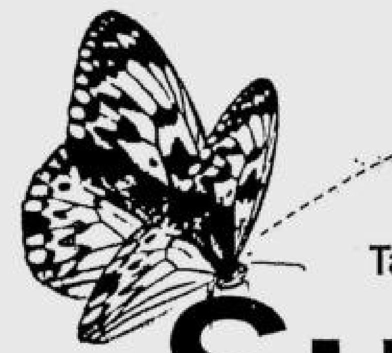
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UK nuke plant missing 30 kilos of plutonium

LONDON—A civilian nuclear fuels reprocessing plant in northwest England cannot account for some 30 kg of plutonium, enough for seven or eight nuclear bombs, a newspaper said Thursday.

The annual audit of nuclear material at all of Britain's civil nuclear plants is expected to reveal that the quantity of plutonium at Sellafield was classified as "material unaccounted for" last year, The Times said.

Figures published by the British Nuclear Group each year reveal an audit of nuclear material which is admitted and processed by the various plants around Britain.

A spokesperson at Sellafield said: "This is material that is unaccounted for, and there is always a discrepancy between the physical inventory and the book inventory. There is no suggestion that any material has left the site."

The Sellafield spokesperson, quoted by Britain's domestic Press Association newswire, said the most likely reason for any shortfall was due to the complex measuring processes that are carried out.

Asked if the 30 kg figure raised concern, she replied: "I wouldn't say we would be alarmed by it, because we are only talking about a book figure here."

Guidelines issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) say that material unaccounted for must not exceed three percent of the amount that is processed.

If the 30 kg figure is accurate, it would equate to around 0.1 percent of that amount, the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for the British Department of Trade and Industry said: "This is an account of an ongoing process and does not represent the loss of any actual material.

"It is not unusual for the accounting process to indicate material unaccounted for."

But independent experts were worried about the disclosure, according to the Times.

"They make this claim of an auditing problem but I would expect them to be overzealous in the current climate of fears about terrorism," John Large, an independent nuclear consultant, was quoted as saying.

Frank Barnaby, a specialist in nuclear weapons, told The Times "there will always be some material unaccounted for but this is a dramatic development." *AFP*

China passes US in consumption of most goods

WASHINGTON—For decades, while China was closed to Western trade, American companies lusted over the boundless merchandise market that such a big country was certain to offer one day.

Now that day has come: China has surpassed the United States in consumption of every basic food, energy and industrial commodity except oil.

The Chinese have overtaken the Americans in refrigerators, watch 50 percent more television sets and use 66 percent more cell phones. Only in automobiles does China still lag, with barely one-tenth the number of motor vehicles the United States has on its roads.

A report released Wednesday by the environmental advocate Earth Policy Institute said, however, that per-capita consumption in China remains far below that of the United States.

China's 1.3 billion people ate 64 million tons of meat in 2004, compared with 38 million tons consumed by the 297 million people in the United States. That's an annual intake 49 kg of meat—mainly pork, with half the world's pigs in China—for every Chinese, and 127 kg of steak, hot dogs and fried chicken for every American.

Fertilizer to grow more food is a measure of more growth to come in China's food consumption. It was double that of the United States in 2004, and both countries cover roughly 3.8 million square miles.

Steel is the commodity that most reflects a modernizing country, and China was using more than twice as much as the United States by 2003. "Steel consumption has climbed to levels not seen in any other country," the report said.

The consumption report said American dominance in automobiles—226 million to 24 million —is one reason the United States uses three times as much oil as China. Another major fossil fuel product, coal, amounts to two-thirds of China's energy consumption, and its homes and factories burn 40 percent more than those in the United States. *AP*

JAPAN'S THIRD AIRPORT
Aerial view shows a jetliner taking off from the newly opened Centrair Japan International Airport at Tokoname near Nagoya, central Japan, Feb. 17. Japan's third major international airport opened, aimed at better connecting the country's industrial heartland and base of industry titan Toyota to the outside world. AFP

Iran warns of immediate response after any attack

TEHRAN—Iran warned Thursday that it would respond immediately to any military strike after a roadworks blast near a nuclear site sparked fears of an attack, the state news agency IRNA reported Thursday.

"An attack, whatever it is, against any site, whether it be nuclear or not, would produce a very rapid response," Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani said.

"The Iranian nation would not yet have even been informed of an attack against a site, nuclear or not, before learning of our decisive reaction."

A big explosion near Iran's Gulf port of Daylam on Wednesday raised speculation of military activity when local Arabic-language television said witnesses reported seeing a missile being fired from an unidentified plane.

But a senior security official insisted there was no hostile strike, just major earthworks in an largely uninhabited area in the south of the country.

The blast was located near Daylam, about 150 km from Bushehr, where a controversial nuclear power plant is being built with Russian help.

"Nothing happened in the region" of Bushehr, insisted Shamkhani, accusing the media of exaggeration.

Iranian officials have charged that the reports carried by the foreign media were part of a "psychological war being waged by the United States against Iran." The administration of US President George W. Bush has warned of possible military action over Iran's nuclear activities, charging that its efforts to develop nuclear fuel are a cover for an atomic weapons program.

US media reports have said the United States has been flying drones over Iran since April 2004, seeking evidence of nuclear weapons work and probing for weaknesses in Iran's air defenses.

Intelligence Minister Ali Younessi confirmed the presence of "American spying instruments" in the skies over Iran and warned that they would be targeted by the military. *AFP*

AN IRANIAN woman mourns during the funeral of a relative who died in a fire at the Arg mosque in Tehran, Feb. 17. The fire broke out on Monday when a faulty electrical heater started a blaze in a Tehran mosque crowded with worshippers. REUTERS

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Super cyclone in Samoa

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa—Three fishermen were found alive and a search was underway for several others missing off Samoa and American Samoa Thursday after supercyclone Olaf burst through the region before taking aim at the already battered Cook Islands.

The main islands in the region escaped the feared devastation from the storm, one of the most powerful ever recorded in the region, although Olaf slammed directly into the small Manu'a islands and destroyed several houses.

There was no loss of life or injury reported on land, but concerns were growing for about 12 fishermen caught in mountainous seas.

Steve Corbett at the New Zealand Rescue Co-ordination center estimated about a dozen fisherman may be missing, as officials worked to piece together how many boats were at sea when Olaf struck.

A New Zealand Air Force search plane found three people in the water nearly 24 hours after the storm hit, and a US Coast Guard aircraft also located a fishing vessel missing east of American Samoa.

Those unaccounted for included a crew of six who took to a liferaft in 190-km-an-hour winds and 15-meter seas when their fishing boat sank. *AFP*

Thaksin plans to withhold funds for Muslim villages

BETONG, Thailand—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's plan to exclude Muslim villages in the far south from development aid if they help separatist militants drew fierce criticism in the region on Thursday.

It would encourage support for a separatist insurgency in which more than 500 people have been killed since it erupted in January last year and damage business confidence further, Muslim leaders, academics and politicians said.

"What the government is doing is creating more enemies than friends," said security analyst Chidchanok Rahimmula of Prince of Songkhla University in Pattani.

"Innocent people in those suspected villages will feel bad and become sympathizers with the militants," she said.

Thaksin, upon his arrival in the restive region on Wednesday, told several hundred Muslim villagers at an army base that villages tempted to help separatist militants would be excluded from government development plans.

The 1,500 villages of the three provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat would be categorized as troubled, or red, semicooperative, or yellow, and peaceful, or green, he said.

"We won't give money to those red villages because we don't want them to spend the money on explosives, road spikes or assassins," he said. "We can't use taxpayers' money to look after those betrayals of their motherland."

Thaksin, who won another nationwide landslide poll victory but not one seat in the troubled south earlier this month, said on Thursday troops would be sent to live in "red" villages until they became "green."

Criticism of the zoning plan would not deter him from going ahead with it, Thaksin said, adding he would visit the region so often that it could become his headquarters.

"It can't drag on like this. I will finish this game as soon as possible," Thaksin told Buddhist businessmen in one of several speeches before cutting short his trip, saying he had to help his candidate in a repoll ordered by the Election Commission.

"I am an extremely generous person with good people and extremely drastic with those dangerous to the country," Thaksin told a cheering crowd of 7,000 students and teachers at a school in Yala. *Reuters*

No dividends from razing bombers' homes, Israel finds

JERUSALEM—Israel's policy of demolishing houses belonging to suicide bombers' families is counterproductive, inflames Palestinian hatred and should be stopped, according to the preliminary conclusions of an army committee investigating the issue, military officials said.

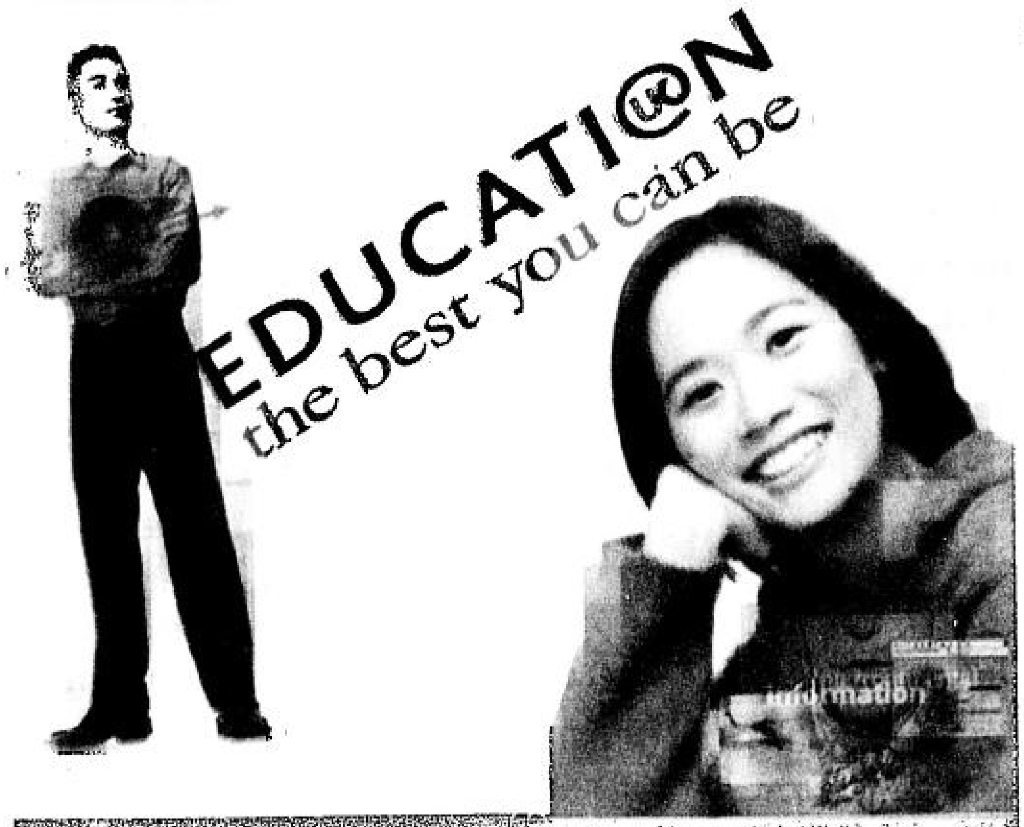
Over the past four years of violence, Israeli soldiers using bulldozers and explosives have flattened hundreds of homes throughout the Gaza Strip and West Bank belonging to the immediate families of militants who have carried out attacks on Israel.

The government said the house demolitions were intended to deter future attacks, either because the bombers would not want to leave their parents homeless or because parents would turn in their militant children before they could carry out an attack to protect their houses.

However, the preliminary conclusions of a panel led by Maj. Gen. Udi Shani said the demolitions had little deterrent effect, military officials said. Instead, the demolitions increased Palestinian hostility toward Israel and they should be halted, according to the conclusions.

The study did not look at the demolition of homes near military posts, which the army says is needed to prevent attacks on soldiers stationed there. *AP*

EDUCATION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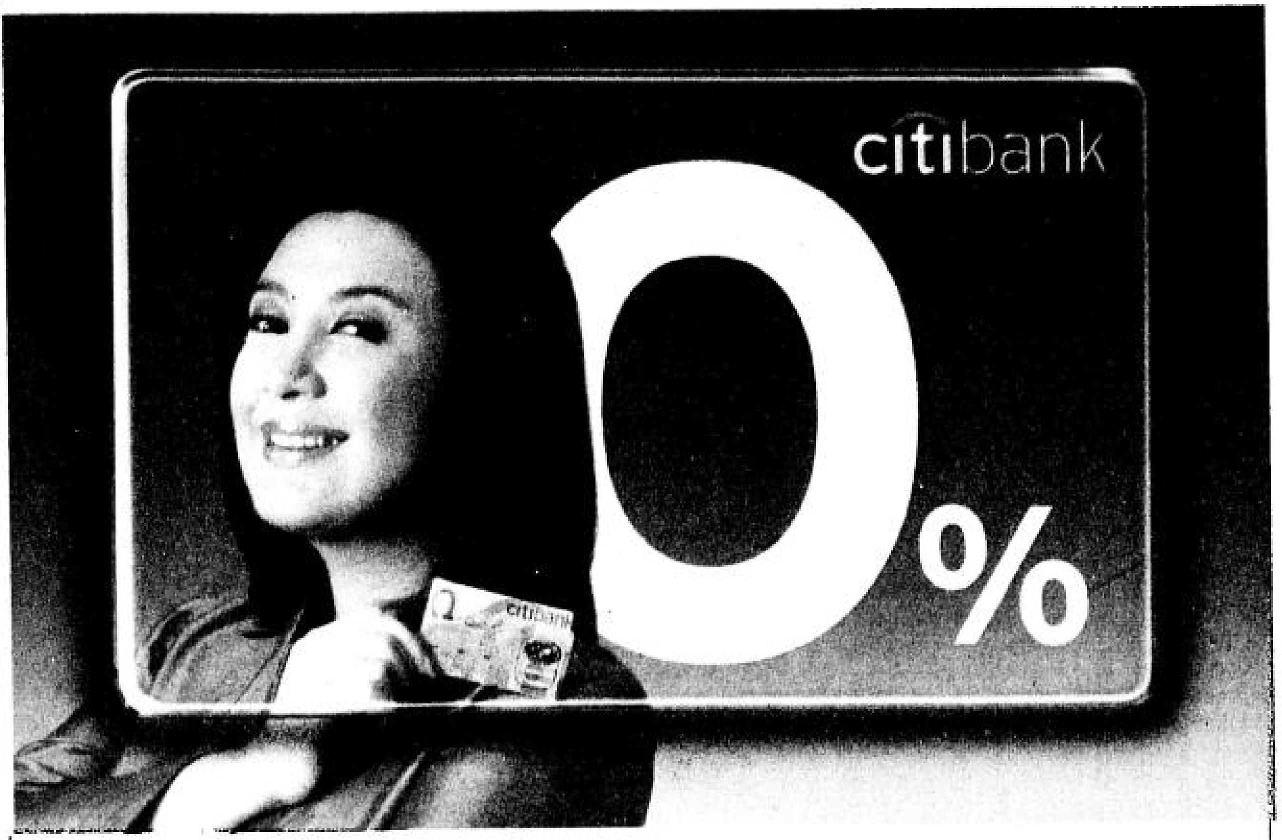

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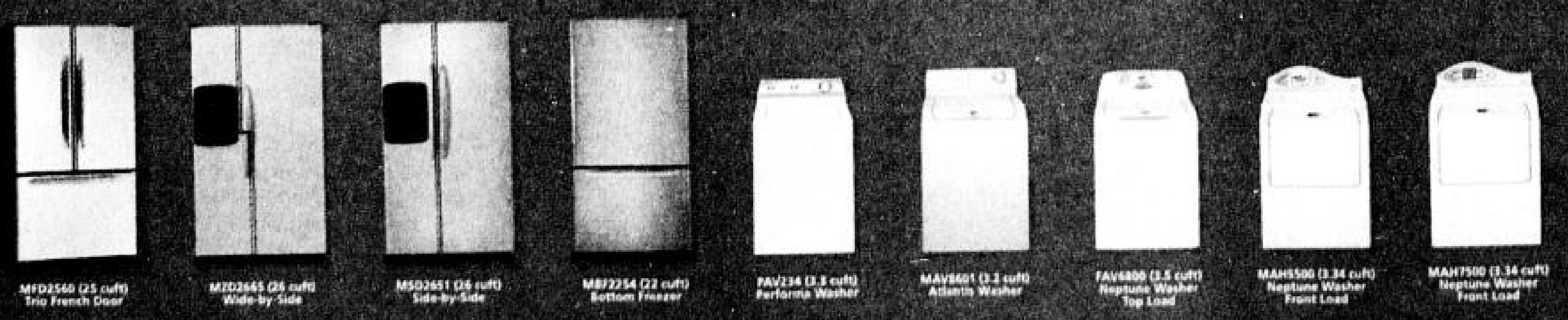
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OPINION

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Bad mood

EDITORIAL

THE TWO-NOTCH ratings downgrade by Moody's Investor Service caught some of our august senators in a foul and fantastical mood. Ignore Moody's, Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. urged on the Senate floor on Wednesday afternoon, hours after the downgrade was announced. "We should act as if Moody's does not exist," administration maverick Sen. Joker Arroyo told reporters.

Unfortunately, Moody's and other credit-rating agencies do exist, and for good reason. Both borrowers and lenders need an independent third party to assess credit-worthiness, and thus determine risk. In sum, what a rating captures is a snapshot of market perceptions, about how much of a credit risk a particular company or country is. Now unless both Pimentel and Arroyo want the Philippines to opt out of global markets altogether, their advice to the country's economic managers to proceed as if nothing happened is worse than inconsistent; it is perilous.

This is not to say that the two-notch downgrade necessarily reflected reality. Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima immediately called the new ratings undeserved. "What is important to point out is that I believe Moody's downgrade is so severe. I believe it did not factor in the changes we've had in the past few months," he said, referring to fiscal reforms that are ongoing.

Revealing the danger inherent in the let's-ignore-them school of thought is also not to say that ratings agencies are infallible. Most famously, the agencies did not see the 1997 Asian economic crisis coming. By and large, however, their ratings do tell us what the markets think.

So we've been downgraded. Let's deal with it. Not by burrowing our heads in the sands of resentment, not by taking refuge behind the ramparts of patriotism, but (and to change metaphors yet again) by finally putting our fiscal house in order.

That is key. We must not forget that the downgrade was expected. Earlier in the week, Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura ventured to say he was expecting a one-notch cut. His statement served to legitimize the official government line, emboldened no doubt by Standard & Poor's one-notch downgrade earlier in the year, that Moody's was about to do the charitable thing.

But general surprise at the deeper downgrade should not blind us to the essential fact: a cut was expected. The reasons are all too familiar: the government spends much more than it earns; our debts have put a strain on our capacity to pay; we are not doing enough to solve the problem as fast as we can.

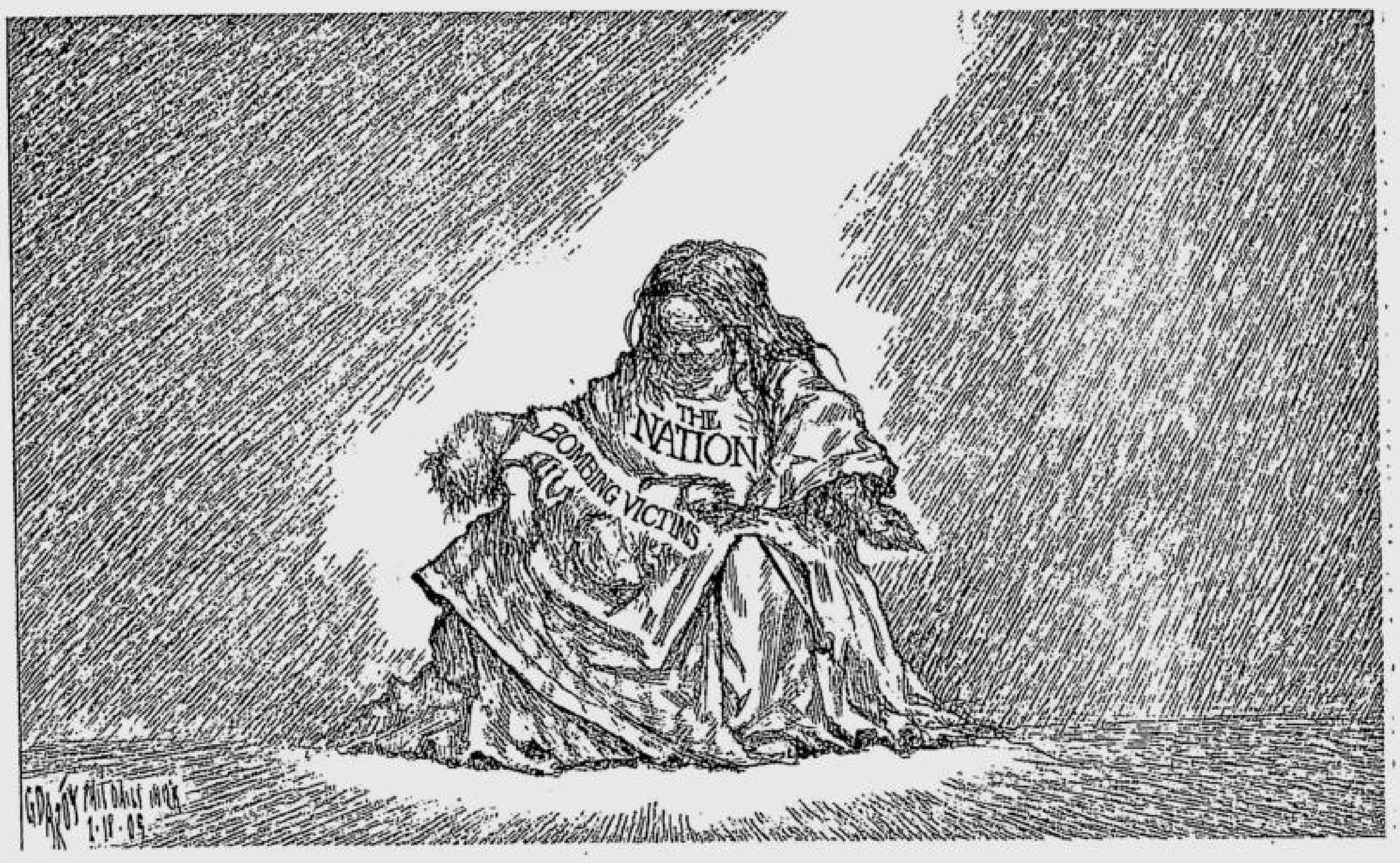
That is, in fact, what the official Moody's announcement said. "Moody's Investors Service has downgraded the Philippines' long-term foreign—and local—currency ceilings and ratings owing to concerns that the large build-up in government and external debt introduces heightened vulnerability to shocks despite recent efforts by the government and legislature to enact fiscal reforms." And: "[P]ublic-sector borrowing requirements will remain large even with more progress in fiscal reform, leaving the Philippines vulnerable to economic, financial, and political shocks, as well as to sudden changes in market sentiment."

Do Pimentel and Arroyo dispute any of this?

These are statements of fact. We may have a different reading of what they mean, but it would be sheer folly to pretend that Moody's does not exist, and that therefore its interpretation of the facts is irrelevant. (For one thing, lower ratings have a real if somewhat delayed impact: they will make our debts even more expensive.)

The Moody's announcement hints at the necessary reforms that need to be undertaken. These are not necessarily what the government should be implementing. For instance, the "rapid implementation" of so-called "front-loading" measures (meaning doing all the drastic reforms in the first years of the President's new term) may not be politically feasible or even economically desirable. It is up to both the executive and the legislature to design the reforms, and then to put them in place.

In other words, our focus should be on the reforms we need, not with the existence or non-existence of third parties who have the effrontery to grade our government's performance or lack of it.



One more story of life and death in World War II

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

A FEW weeks ago, I visited an aunt, whom I had not seen in a long time, in the tiny one-story apartment she rents in Malabon. She lives alone there, except for a great-granddaughter in grade school she takes care of during school days (the father fetches her to spend the weekend with her parents). My aunt is 95 years old.

She is a small woman, less than five feet tall, and she has become smaller because she is now stooped with age. But she still does all the housework, cooks, cleans the house and hand-washes her laundry. She is a little hard of hearing, but she can still read, sew and knit without using eyeglasses. She is the younger sister of my mother who died at age 30, when I was just starting to go to school, leaving us six children orphans. My aunt became our surrogate mother.

It is nothing short of a miracle that she has lived to be this old because she almost died during the Battle for Manila. In fact, her husband and crippled younger brother died at Fort Santiago, within sight of the American forces on the other side of the river. She and her little son almost died at San Agustin Church, where the Japanese had herded the women and children of Intramuros and tried to kill them.

February is the anniversary of the Liberation of Manila and the massacre of residents of Intramuros and Malate by the Japanese rear guard, which is why I am writing about my aunt. Her story is as moving as those of the casualties and survivors that the INQUIRER published in a series the last several days.

My aunt's name is Eugenia Villanueva-Sanchez. Her husband was Pedro Sanchez Sr., and her brother was Paquito Villanueva, who was crippled by polio. Survivors of Intramuros and Fort Santiago who came across them may remember them or their names.

The family would not have been trapped had they heeded warnings to leave Intramuros as the Americans were already coming. We had a family compound on an island in the middle of fishponds in Malabon, but we also had a shoe store in Intramuros, one of a long line of shoe stores and tailoring shops on Calle Real. Our store's name was Real Shoe Store.

My uncle Paquito was the manager, my aunt was the housekeeper, and Pedro was one of the expert shoemakers working for them. The workers made the shoes and boots at the back of the store; living quarters were on the mezzanine.

My father kept telling them to come back to Malabon but business was good in Intramuros. So many Japanese officers were ordering boots and my uncles were loath to close the store and leave all that opportunity.

When they woke up to the danger because of the more frequent air raids and the sound of artillery in the distance, it was already too late. When they tried to leave, the streets out of Intramuros were closed. Japanese sentries told them to go back. Later, they heard several loud explosions. The bridges across the Pasig River had been blown up by the Japanese.

Still later, Japanese soldiers went from door to door telling residents to come out. They were herded to the San Agustin Church. There the men were separated from the women and children. A doctor tried to protest the separation of the family members. The Japanese shot him dead.

The men were ordered to walk to Fort Santiago, while the women and children were locked inside the San Agustin Church. As the cannon blasts came closer (the American forces were already on the other side of the river and coming up from the south), the Japanese opened the church doors a little, poured gasoline in and then hurled a grenade inside. Those in front were immediately killed by the blast and fire, but my aunt and her son and others who were behind immediately dived under the church pews and were saved.

At Fort Santiago, meanwhile, the men were locked up inside the dungeons. (This information now comes from survivors of Fort Santiago.) Little by little, they were able to dig through the adobe wall to an adjoining small cell, then punched a hole through the top of the wall beside the river. The hole was only big enough for one person to squeeze through at a time. From there, it was just a short dash to the edge of the wall to the river, and then a long swim to the other side and freedom.

As the Americans came closer, the Japanese also poured gasoline into the dungeons and threw grenades. As the dungeon burned, the prisoners squeezed through the hole one by one, ran to the edge of the wall and jumped into the river. Some were too weak to swim across and drowned.

My uncle-in-law Pedro was already out when he heard my uncle Paquito calling him. Being a cripple, he couldn't reach the hole in the ceiling. Pedro went back to help him. But even had Paquito been able to get out, it was unlikely for the cripple to be able to swim to the other side. Pedro stayed with his brother-in-law up to the end. They were never able to get out. We were never able to find their remains.

Years later, the small hole was still there. When I was working in the Manila Chronicle nearby and we used to walk to Fort Santiago some afternoons, I would point it out to my fellow journalists and tell them the story of my two uncles who died there together. That hole has now been patched by workers who probably didn't know its story, no doubt because some hapless tourist might step into it and break a leg.

Meanwhile, my aunt wants to see the dungeon, San Agustin Church and Calle Real one more time before she dies, although she hopes to live to be a hundred and promises to throw a big birthday bash.

Mao, John Lennon and Che

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

"MAO Tse Tung is the new Hello Kitty." I saw a law student wearing a T-shirt with a picture of Chairman Mao, and told him, wow, am I so happy that students still remember the Great Helmsman. And thus his nonchalant reply about a veritable icon, so wonderfully irreverent, so unthinkable during my student days.

That was a time when Mao was venerated, his words meditated upon like biblical passages. When he was quoted in campus propaganda, his words would be typed in bold font. Before computers were invented, that meant typing the same text twice over; overdo it and you risk ripping a hole in your Gestetner stencil paper (my students today must imagine the mimeo machine the way I think of Gutenberg's movable press).

It was the reign of the "grim and determined." I remember asking an older student activist if they liked John Lennon's "Imagine" (or for that matter, Simon and Garfunkel's "The Boxer," or Dylan's "Blowing in the Wind"). Surely Marx would have given his imprimatur to the anguished anthems of the counter-culture. But no, the older student said something like: "*Hindi siya angkop sa ating mala-piyudal at mala-kolonyal na situwasyon.*"

I wanted to say, "Right on," but he might label me part of a right-wing conspiracy. Surely he could not have objected to the lines: "Imagine no possessions…no need for greed or hunger, Imagine all the people sharing all the world." But he might have recoiled at the words: "Imagine there's no countries … nothing to kill or die for…Imagine all the people living life in peace." Where would that leave the armed struggle for national liberation?

How I wished I could have shown him later biographies of Jiang Jing, the ultra-left Mrs. Mao, who was said to have a fondness in private for flowery dresses and boy-meets-girl movies but in public required her one billion subjects to wear the drab regulation tunic and watch only revolutionary operas of machine gun-toting cadres.

In contrast, while Mao's standing has declined, there is renewed interest in Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentine-born doctor who joined hands with Fidel Castro, a law student at the University of Havana, in exporting revolution to other parts of Latin America (he was killed in a military encounter in Bolivia at the age of 39). Bookstores show new biographies and commentaries, and an Internet search yields a forthcoming movie "Diarios de moticicleta" (Motorcycle Diaries), about his famous journey upon his graduation from medical school through Latin America, supposedly a radicalizing moment in his life.

Why the new historic high for Che almost 40 years after his death? Allow me to venture an outsider's explanation. The Che revival, or at least the biographical revival of a dreamy Che, shows a romantic turn in our political life. After all, only Che is quoted speaking of such things as "love": "At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. …. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, the most sacred cause, and make it one and indivisible."

It heralds the decline of the old type of Leftism that searched for a single universal theory that can explain everything, much like Marxism or Maoism purported to provide all the answers, from physics to politics, from the political to the personal—and furnished the commissars to make sure you got it. Today their true believers remind me of the father in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding," who explained how all words have their root in Greek, including the Japanese word "*kimono*"!

It shows rather an inward turning, at seeing history in its more human scale. In that sense, the older reformers were anti-Marcos or anti-American, but were not anti-Establishment. Their aim was to seize state power, not transform it. They aimed to change the world, not themselves.

In contrast, the nonchalance of today's students, the Mao-is-the-new-Hello-Kitty attitude, is most welcome. They are not trapped into package-deal orthodoxies of whatever ideology. They are freed from the corresponding demand for total allegiance, and George W. Bush's attitude "either you're with us, or you're against us." They live out what John Reed, author of "Ten Days that Shook the World," said in his movie biography (and here I paraphrase): "If you ask us to give our selves to the revolution, first we must nourish the self that will be given." They realize that for them truly to humanize the world, first they must themselves be fully human. They are more attuned to the mystical Lennon who said: "Life is what happens while we're busy making other plans."

It shows the romanticism that is the legacy of people power. Therein lies its strength and its weakness. People power triumphs because it isn't "scientifically" programmed or programmable, and is at its most powerful when it is spontaneous and honest, when it is peopled by those moved by Che's "great feeling of love." It is most dangerous when it is conjured, engineered and manipulated by shadowy elites, engaged in what Recto called "political ventriloquism."

As a true "Lennonist," I close with his words: "You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will live as one."

* * *

Comments to raul.pangalangan@up.edu.ph

Bombings underscore economy's vulnerability

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE TWO-NOTCH downgrade of the Philippines' sovereign credit ratings by Moody's, announced a day following the Valentine's Day bombings which killed 13 people and injured more than 150 others in Makati and two Mindanao cities, rattled the market, highlighting the fragility of the economic upswing indicated by the 6.1 percent GDP growth in 2004.

The two developments—the first financial, and the other, related to security concerns—threw a damper on the optimistic outlook fueled by the heftiest economic expansion for 15 years. The sequence of the disturbances could not have come at a worse time—amid the intensified fighting in Sulu between government forces and a faction of the Moro National Liberation Front.

The Valentine's Day bombings and the credit ratings cut underlined the vulnerability of economic recovery to shocks associated with the terrorist attacks and efforts to curb the fiscal deficit and external debt. In the wake of these unsettling events, which again underlined the fact that government was not on top of things, the Philippine Stock Exchange's composite index fell 3.80 points or 0.18 percent on the trading day following Moody's announcement.

The two events halted the momentum of the appreciation of the peso relative to the US dollar, following the good news of the 6.1 percent GDP. The peso fell to 55.05 to a dollar at the close of trading Wednesday from 54.69 last Tuesday. Administration officials tended to dismiss the drop as a "knee-jerk" reaction to the bombings and security concerns, which cannot realistically be downgraded in view of the intensification of the Mindanao fighting and the claim by the Abu Sayyaf that it was responsible for the series of bombings.

As if the fiscal deficit was not enough, the bombings raised concerns over terrorism to a higher profile in the national agenda, increased the investment community's calculation of business risks in the country and created doubts about the sustainability of the economic turnaround.

Although Moody's downgrade was not unexpected, the two-notch cut pained the government. Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima described it as "too severe," saying it did not take into account "the changes that have happened in the past few months."

The "changes" cited by Purisima include such things as "the common political will exhibited by the President and the legislature in crafting politically unpopular revenue measures to help increase revenues and in putting a tight lid on the budget." Unfortunately for the government, Moody's did not see the fiscal performance of the administration in the same light.

Purisima said the government incurred a budget deficit of P186.1 billion in 2004, significantly lower than its P197.1 billion ceiling, and pointed out that the reduction put the country one year ahead of its deficit-cutting schedule to 2009 from 2010. However, this argument failed to impress Moody's, which saw the situation differently and sent essentially the message that the government was not doing enough to close the deficit gap and reduce the debt.

Moody's said it recognized "that the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo inherited much-weakened fiscal structure, yet progress in enacting reform is proving difficult as the President's majority coalition in Congress grapples with politically painful choices." Although it noted that some improvement in tax collections had reversed the decline in the ratio of revenue to gross domestic product, yet the government debt-to-GDP and debt-to-revenue rations remained well above those of countries with similar rating.

"Thus, public sector borrowing requirements will remain large even with more progress in fiscal reform, leaving the Philippines vulnerable to economic, financial and political shocks, as well as to sudden changes in market sentiment," Moody's said.

Non-government economists said the downgrade represented pressure on the government to do more than enact two revenue-enhancing legislation out of the eight-measure tax package it sent to Congress. Former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno, who teaches economics at the University of the Philippines, called on the administration to undertake a "quick recovery plan" that should focus on expanding and increasing the value-added tax rates, involve cutting the share of local governments in national taxes as well as reducing the "pork barrel" of members of Congress. The administration has been reluctant to touch the last two proposals because they bring political costs, in that they could erode the President's hold on her coalition's majority in Congress.

While the Valentine's Day terrorist attacks raised the profile of the security concerns, they also produced political dividends for the administration. The atrocities represented by the civilian casualties have served to galvanize public opinion against the Abu Sayyaf, and behind the President's tough military campaign to crush the MNLF rebellion and to "wipe out" the Abu Sayyaf. The campaign has shifted attention away from the cut in credit ratings, with the possible consequence that the government's momentum in getting more of its tax package enacted by Congress could slow down.

Campaigns against Muslim separatist rebellions have historically tended to benefit administrations politically since the time of the Marcos regime. The Estrada administration gained popularity from the campaign that led to the capture of 45 camps of the MILF. Although the anti-terrorist campaign may help the President recover from a slump in her public approval rating, it diverts her administration's focus from the fiscal crisis.

A full day

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

SINCE the editors decided last year to add one more free day in my work schedule, I've come to look forward to every Wednesday as a mid-week breather in an otherwise packed calendar. And because I don't have a deadline to meet on Wednesdays, I've come to reserve the day for "optional" activities like granting interviews and accepting invitations.

Last Wednesday proved, though, that even a "free" day can be full and satisfying, especially when devoted to activities that are both gratifying and enriching.

The day started at the Don Bosco Technical Institute in Makati where I had been invited, over a month ago, to address third and fourth year high school students on the theme "Ang mga Kababaihan sa ating Lipunan (Women in our Society)." I'd come equipped with a power point presentation prepared years ago mainly for a female audience, so I was thrown off a bit upon finding an audience dominated by young men, with the exception of a few teachers. I later found out that I was addressing not just the young men in the large air-conditioned classroom where I was, but three other classes as well, linked by live video. Later, assistant principal Lito Tenerife told me that the combined activity for Social Studies, Filipino and Christian Living was meant not just to provide "inputs" to the students, but also to train them on handling live video conferencing. So, I was only a lab subject, huh?

Anyway, the young "Bosconians" proved to be sufficiently interested in the topic, and there was hardly any hint of resentment or skepticism among the young men. During the question-and-answer portion, they seemed to take the notion of gender equality quite matter-of-factly. Unlike, say, during sessions with bigger audiences where someone, usually a man, invariably asks if "it is not Filipino men who need liberating." What the students wanted to know was how gender awareness could help them, and if the attitudes of feminist organizations toward men had changed through the years.

Well, if the students of Don Bosco are an indication, then times have indeed changed, and the road to true gender equality need not be as difficult as feared.

* * *

FROM DON Bosco, I had to rush to the US Embassy where it was worth going through the hassles of security checks just to be present at the 16th Annual Awarding of the Benigno S. Aquino Jr. Fellowships for Professional Development.

Each year, two Aquino "fellows"—for public service and for journalism—are chosen to participate in a study tour in the United States to meet and exchange views with professionals in their fields. I made the extra effort this year because the awardee for public service is Yasmin Busran-Lao, recognized for "her efforts to assist impoverished communities in Mindanao and promote the role of women in peace-building efforts."

Yas, as her friends call her, is a sister in the women's group Pilipina and was even the third nominee for a party-list seat in Congress last year under the women's party-list Abanse! Pinay. What makes Yas even more deserving of recognition is that she is a Muslim undertaking the difficult and perhaps even dangerous work of changing traditional Muslim attitudes toward women and women's roles in society.

"I couldn't quite believe that the small things I do in my small corner would merit such attention," Yasmin said of her reaction when she first heard of the Aquino fellowship. Her feeling, she said, was that she had long found her reward in "personal fulfillment and affirmation for the things we do," and that "seeing change happen" was an award in itself. And though she at first wanted to keep quiet about the award, Yasmin said she later realized that "the award is itself an advocacy for our work."

Most memorable was Yas' tribute to her husband Andy, who has stood by her all these years, she said, even as he had to withstand insistent queries from his mother and mother-in-law why he was "allowing" his wife to do what she was doing. Sadly, neither Andy nor their daughter Amanah could make it to the awards ceremony because Amanah had exams scheduled at the last minute. Other members of their family were on hand, though.

The other Aquino fellow, by the way, is Jose A. Torres Jr., a senior editor of abs-cbn-News.com and a freelance print journalist. He is best remembered for his book "Into the Mountain: Hostaged by the Abu Sayyaf," which was such an engrossing read and shed light on the ASG kidnappings through the stories of "little people" who had harrowing encounters with these bandits. Not bad for someone who says he's in journalism simply to "tell stories of people's lives."

* * *

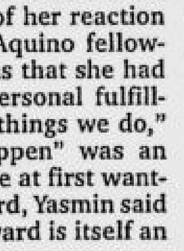
AFTER A BIT of shopping, I decided to check out the movies showing at the Shangri-la Mall's Cineplex, especially at the vaunted "Premiere" theater where there's "bottomless" popcorn. When I saw that "Ray," the biopic for which Jamie Foxx is predicted to win Oscar for Best Actor, was showing in a smaller theater, I immediately bought tickets for myself, the hubby and our daughter.

At times, it seems as if Foxx is not so much acting as channeling Ray Charles, who is shown in this movie as a true musical pioneer who dared blur the boundaries between musical genres. Charles' life story (he was Ray Charles Robinson in real life) is told against the backdrop of life in the United States in the years shortly after World War II, including his inadvertent role as a civil rights champion. Even more admirable is the movie's unflinching look at both the good and bad of Ray Charles, including his drug addiction, his womanizing and his demons.

Overall, an honest, deeply felt film about a musical genius who was an all-too-frail human being. And for making the most of a role of a lifetime, Foxx deserves that Oscar!

Baby-arsonist

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

JUST recently, the term "damaged culture" became widely used in describing our bad traits. This reminded me of the controversial essay in Atlantic Monthly with the same title by James Fallows.

When I was introduced to Fallows over a decade ago at lunch in Kamayan, I greeted him by saying, "Oh, you're the guy. I presume you're in town researching for another article that will infuriate all of us." With that tactless remark I was shunted away to a corner like the bratty little boy I still am. No loss, I said to myself, as I concentrated on the *lechon de leche*, but that was the last time I was invited by the host.

Filipinos are a forgiving lot; Fallows was never tarred and feathered.

In 1925, a similar report on the Philippines and the Filipinos appeared in book form and was titled "The Isles of Fear: The Truth about the Philippines." It was written by Katherine Mayo, who also wrote a similarly infuriating book on India that was publicly burned. Threatened with being tarred and feathered, I don't know if she ever returned to India for a lecture tour and book signing. In the Philippines, despite the grumbling, she would probably still be invited to a *lechon* lunch instead of being roasted alive.

Yes we are a forgiving lot. It has been almost two decades since Edsa 1986, and we still have to find closure for the martial law years.

Re-reading "The Isles of Fear" was an eye-opener. I realized first that the black-and-white photographs used to illustrate the book have been marvelously re-invented into striking, and now very expensive, pictures by the painter Bencab. For example, the frontispiece showing a man barefoot and holding his hat, photographed in profile as in a criminal mug shot, now enlarged and tinged with muted color, is one of the jewels of the Cultural Center art collection. Another photograph of an Ilocana lighting an over-size cigar has been cropped and re-made by Bencab into a picture that now hangs in a posh London flat.

Of the many anecdotes related by Mayo, this one stands out in my memory and is worth quoting here:

"One quiet morning … a fisherman came rushing in from his work in Manila Bay with a great tale to tell. As he bent over his net, he had seen bubbles rising in a steady column from the depths. Looking farther, he perceived that the bubbles, like a crown of pearls, marked the center of a shadowy cross stretched upon the surface of the sea. Greatly amazed, he had dipped his coconut drinking cup into the bubbling stream, tasted it and found it sweet. Sweet water provided in the midst of the ocean! On that, he had sped ashore, aflame with his news.

"A priest, accompanying the fisherman back to the spot, found the stream and forthwith blessed it, proclaiming a miracle. Then the whole district of Tondo flung itself into small boats. And from that moment no one needed to lead the way, for, day and night, the spot was crowded with human cargoes, awaiting their turn to drink.

"Two days later, one of the liveliest epidemics of cholera on record broke out in the district of Tondo. Dr. Heiser, grappling with it, quickly discovered the history just narrated. Then he, also made a little voyage—resulting in the discovery that the unsalted stream and crown of pearls rose from a cracked city sewage pipe, whose poisonous contents the people in mounting thousands were eagerly drinking down. And so great already was the hold of the thing upon the whole city that Mr. Taft, then Governor, hesitated forty-eight hours before taking definite action, for fear lest an insurrection be provoked."

Mayo also wrote about women in jail, one a victim of an abusive usurer in Tarlac, the other accompanying the youngest criminal in an Ilocos Norte jail. The latter, if true, is something for the Guinness Book of World Records. Her informant, A.W. Prautch, related seeing a woman holding a sick baby in jail. When he inquired about the wretch, the Governor replied, matter-of-factly, that the woman was there to take care of the baby. When he inquired what the baby was doing in a prison cell, he was informed that the baby was guilty of arson. The story briefly is as follows:

"The woman, it appeared, was the wife of a poor laborer. One day when the man was off in the fields working, the woman climbed down the ladder of the shack and went to look for faggots to boil the evening rice. The baby, then just learning to creep, remained alone in the room. The baby was supposed to show discretion. What he did do, seemingly, was to hitch his way over to the fire-pot and pull out a pretty red ember. After which it would be a matter of minutes, no more, before the whole nipa-palm shack would blaze. The neighbors rescued the baby. But the house—which by the way belonged to the laborer and his wife and was all they owned in the world—[burned down]."

When the police came and investigated, the blame fell on the baby who was committed to prison to await trial. Problem was that the baby wasn't weaned yet, so the mother had to accompany the baby in jail and feed it.

Fortunately, Mr. Prautsch convinced the Governor to post bail that Saturday, get the baby and mother out of jail and on Monday during the trial simply suspend judgment. Without his intercession, the case would have dragged on and no one would have cared.

Now that really makes the Philippines the Isles of Fear.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Ad-wise

THE FIGURES are mind-boggling, so much so that they made the banner headline in BusinessWorld last week: "RP companies spend P113.26 billion on ads."

The figure comes from Nielsen Media Research, based on their monitoring of ads on television, radio and print. The P113-billion figure was for 2004, representing a 20-percent increase over the previous year's advertising expenditures, a very healthy growth rate when you look at the way other business sectors have been faring.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

What does all this mean for the Philippines and the Filipino?

Mass media, mass reach

Any basic course in business will mention ads as being essential. Even the smallest *sari-sari* store "advertises" itself with a little sign, usually provided by a large company so that the *sari-sari* store's signage is itself transformed into advertising for some food or soft-drink manufacturer.

But in this age of mass media, we're interested in a much wider reach for advertising. Nielsen's figures show that television receives the bulk of advertising revenues: P82.2 billion or 73 percent of the total. Radio stations got P19.5 billion or 17 percent, while print media got the crumbs, about P9.6 billion or 8 percent.

Advertising and mass media go together—the ad companies aim for the mega-reach provided by radio, TV and print to get their clients' potential customers. Mass media, on the other hand, need the revenues to operate—broadcast media is basically free while newspaper sales and subscriptions are almost token in terms of supporting operating expenses.

Mass media's reach is overwhelming, literally reaching millions with each TV ad, the messages repeated through blitzkrieg campaigns, a kind of mental carpet bombing that may last only a few days, to be quickly replaced by a new campaign with fresh new messages. The goal here is to imprint on consumers a particular brand name.

Defining the good life

To get a brand name through to people, advertisements draw from culture: our notions of cleanliness, beauty, good health, nutrition and a "good life" in general. But even as they draw from popular culture, the advertisements reshape existing notions, transforming society itself, for better or for worse, especially in relation to particular needs—and wants.

From Nielsen's data, we learn the country's top 20 advertisers are: Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, Unilab, Nestlé, Smart Communications, Fortune, Globe Telecom, San Miguel Brewing Group, Johnson & Johnson, Ginebra San Miguel, Pagcor, Whitehall, Mead Johnson, PLDT, California Manufacturing Corp., Universal Robina Corp., Monde Nissin, Jollibee and Tanduay.

We see then that the most advertised products are home-care products such as detergents and a range of personal-care products, including shampoos, soaps and skin care lotions. Other widely advertised products are medicines, cigarettes and alcohol, snack foods (including instant noodles), fast foods and telecommunications (cell phone-related services). And yes, there's Pagcor. Now I'm not quite sure how we should classify their ads as directly endorsing gambling or justifying gambling by showing how it supports social concerns.

Take time out to list the main messages you're getting through the ads, and you can actually get insights into what Filipino culture is like. I'll be random and list some of my own thoughts (some, of course, tongue-in-cheek), just focusing on the gender aspect. Notice the messages are often for women, recognizing that they do a lot of the buying for the family. (And if you listen hard enough, you'll find the voice-over, the one telling the women to buy, even "feminine hygiene products," is that of a man.)

A woman's most important assets, for getting a boyfriend, lover or husband, are her skin whitened with X brand and hair shampooed with X brand. (What is it about the Philippines and hair? Of the 10 most advertised brands in 2004, six were shampoos: Palmolive, Head and Shoulders, Pantene, Sunsilk, Rejoice and Cream Silk.)

Once you get that lover or husband, the sure-fire way of keeping him is using particular detergents and fabric softeners so his clothes look clean, smell clean. (But don't forget to feed him with instant noodles as well.) And when the kids start arriving, show you love them with certain infant formulas (especially those that claim to produce geniuses), vitamins, instant noodles, a cell phone.

Notice that the messages are often for women, on how to get and keep a man. Men, on the other hand, are urged to show their virility, through particular vitamins, cigarettes and alcohol. Even cell phones have brought in the "sexy male" image: one company shows a man holding a cell phone with screaming women dying to get their hands on him.

Life imitates ads

Ads don't just respond to needs; they're powerful for creating wants as well. They can distort priorities. Doctors always ask me why their patients will complain that they can't afford to take a particular medicine regularly and yet spend thousands each month on cell phones. We see that the telecommunications companies play on our basic human need to be in touch with other people, and amplify this to create new wants: don't be content with hearing your loved one's voice, get a phone with a camera so you can send your picture as well.

The advertising industry spends millions on research, including the use of social scientists to look into what's already out there, from people's primordial needs to the latest slang terms. But in the process, they literally fashion us to believe what is fashionable, from clothing styles to language itself. We may scoff at and spoof many of the ads, but don't forget that the more outrageously ridiculous they are, the deeper the product name recall.

In the end, ads don't just imitate life; we find ourselves living out the ads, buying the products with the hope of becoming a bit more like the advertising models with all the connotations of glamour and sophistication and sex appeal and social status. I've wondered how many night-time conversations have people imitating that ad for a vitamin claiming the product can keep a man's energy levels at a maximum, even if he's put in a whole day's work at the office. "*Ako pa…*" (loose translation: Me? Tired?), he claims seductively, suggesting he's ready for more "work," made indefatigable by the vitamin.

We need to teach our kids to be more "ad-wise," conscious of how ads manipulate our feelings and aspirations. But before we can do that, we need to be sure we are able to read through the ads as well, and reflect on how they do affect our lives, from what we serve on the table to the way we use our cell phones.

It's time we turned the table around and tell the advertisers: "*Ako pa…*" Me? I'm not that gullible. I'm ad-wise.

The INQUIRER is a member of the
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Proposed VAT measure unconstitutional

REP. Joey Sarte Salceda, the chair of the House committee on economic affairs, in his article "IneVATable, but the rich must also do their share" (PDI, 2/6/05, p. A16), states that the "VAT rate hike is the biggest revenue source but is, concededly, mildly regressive."

However, Section 28 (1), Article VI of the Philippine Constitution is very clear: "The rule of taxation shall be uniform and equitable. The Congress shall evolve a progressive system of taxation."

In the same article, Salceda tries to justify the imposition of the VAT by saying: "While 80 percent of consumption of the lowest 40 percent poor is VAT-free, they still pay more as a percent of their income. But, this can be cured by progressive public expenditures on health and education more efficiently targeted at the poor."

But this pronouncement of Salceda is squarely contradicted by the decreases in the budget appropriations that Congress provides for health, education and other social services while debt payment appropriations have continuously increased.

Records show that the percentage share for social services has continuously decreased from 36.06, 29.15, 28.73 and 28.00 for the years 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively. On the other hand, the annual debt payments by the government have increased steeply from P274.4 billion when President Macapagal-Arroyo took over in 2001 to P542.2 billion in 2004.

As government employees who, together with the private sector daily wage earners and workers, practically represent the majority tax base, we are already very much burdened by the taxes automatically withheld every payday from our meager salaries which have remained "frozen" at their 2001 levels. With the unabated price hikes of oil, basic goods and services, the last thing we need is additional tax impositions that will only push us further down into our present financial, day-to-day difficulties.

LETTERS

No better proof is therefore needed to tell us that the VAT is anti-employee, anti-people and unconstitutional. Thus, our call stands: Junk the VAT.

—SANTIAGO Y. DASMARIÑAS JR.,
secretary general,
Confederation for Unity,
Recognition and Advancement
of Government Employees,
9-A, K-F Street, Kamuning, QC

Supreme Court chief's grateful response

WORDS are inadequate to express our sincerest gratitude to Jolene R. Bulambot for her article titled "Paying tribute to a Davide leader." (PDI, 2/5/05) Jolene did much honor to our father, Papa Undo, and made the celebration of the centenary of his birth all the more meaningful.

Coming as it does from someone who is not related to him and to us by consanguinity or affinity, the tribute becomes a work of love with the greater purpose of inspiring others to emulate his life of selfless love and service, as well as his values and virtues. Thus, Jolene has given broader dimension and meaning to her profession.

On my next visit to Papa, I will tell him of the great deed Jolene has done to him and his family. May God continue to shower Jolene with His choicest blessings.

—HILARIO G. DAVIDE JR.,
chief justice,
Supreme Court of the Philippines,
Padre Faura Street, Manila

Aid funds used for war?

THIS is in reaction to the INQUIRER editorial on the negotiations between the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. (PDI, 2/7/05) The GOP-MILF peace agreement may be signed by both parties within this year, but it is most likely that the so-called MILF lost command will mature into another rebel group. Thus, there will always be Muslim rebels that the government will have to deal with.

In such a scenario, there will be no peace in Mindanao. While a faction of the MILF will have the legal authority to access funds for development, the lost command will continue to sow terror.

But how is it that large amounts of development aid were diverted to purchase high-powered firearms that were used against the government and support terroristic activities?

—DING TELERON,
isidroteleron@hotmail.com

Valentine's Day bombings

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo is on the right path in our fight against terrorism. Since the terrorists have only one goal—to inflict damage to create maximum fear—the answer is to wipe them out. We should rally behind the President in our unswerving fight to make our country a safer place to live in.—**Jun Anota, 17 Victoria Park Road, Singapore**

* * *

Excuse me, President Arroyo. Wipe out the Abu Sayyaf? I don't think so. Not in your lifetime. When the military had them cornered in a hospital, they let them go. Conversion, conversion. Before you start the war on terrorism, check your own turf for there's a different kind of terrorism that's so pervasive in your Armed Forces. It's called corruption. Would you really expect your best soldiers to put their best foot forward when their generals have other plans?

When a small group of bandits cannot be annihilated by an army, it's time to wonder what kind of army leaders you have.—**Al Camacho, 258 Elderberry Ct., California**

* * *

I was there, and I thank God there were only a few who died. There were many people there; it was rush hour and everyone was going home to the family.

After the incident, I decided to go back to the office and just spend the night there. I had no other means of knowing the news but through the Internet.—**Moppet Castillo, 31A Kalamansi St., Western Bicutan, Taguig City**

* * *

It is sad to note that there are people out there who can't seem to do right. This is one occasion when I think, vengeance and getting even is but the correct and the right thing to do.—**Hope Maningas, 135 Chico St., Casimiro Village, Pamplona, Las Piñas City**

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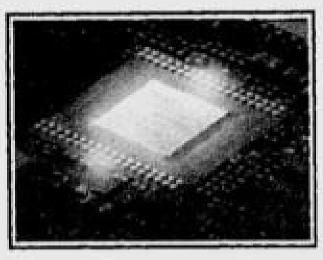

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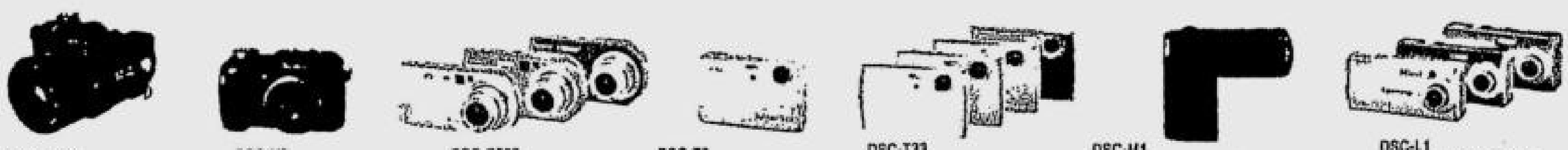

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DSC-V3
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- Nightshot/ Night Framing
- Manual Camera Function

DSC-P200
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- 3x Optical Zoom
- Carl Zeiss "Vario-Tessar"
- MPEG Movie VX

DSC-T3
- Effective 5.1 Mega Pixels
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- 3x Optical Zoom

DSC-T33
- Effective 5.1 Mega Pixels
- Carl Zeiss Vario Tessar lens
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- 3x Optical Zoom

DSC-M1
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- 3x Optical Zoom
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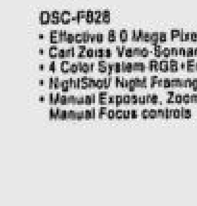

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Man held for ₱60-M phone card scam

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—A man was arrested by agents of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) for his alleged involvement in a multimillion-peso cellular phone card scam that victimized residents in Northern Luzon and Southern Tagalog.

Supt. Paterno Orduña, CIDG Pangasinan team leader, said Rex Ingles, 22, allegedly duped at least 30 people from Baguio City, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Quezon and Laguna of P50 million-P60 million.

Ingles was arrested by the Pangasinan CIDG team and the police of Roxas, Oriental Mindoro, in Barangay Udiong in that town on Feb. 14.

Orduña said five warrants of arrest were issued against Ingles by courts in the provinces and cities where he allegedly conducted his business.

Police said Ingles, a native of Lucena City, started his business sometime in 2003 in Baguio City where he studied.

According to him, this was how he deceived his victims: He got cash for orders for cellular cards which he delivered 10 days later. Since he sold the cards for only P240 each (phone cards are retailed at P285-P300), he was able to get many clients who ordered phone cards in bulk.

"I let them believe that I had a source of cards who sell at a very low price," Ingles said. He rented cars to impress his clients and make them believe that he was a big time investor.

Ingles used the money he collected from new clients to buy phone cards ordered by old clients. Because of the low price, the clients even asked their friends to order from him.

He also lured several "investors" who gave him money. "I told them I will just give them the interests earned later," he said.

The business went smoothly and Ingles lived a luxurious life until the orders piled up and their amounts reached millions of pesos.

When he could no longer deliver the phone cards, his clients got suspicious.

Ingles failed to lure new clients resulting in the collapse of his business.

He said this was the time when he decided to go to Oriental Mindoro where he lived with his wife and his mother. He said he earned a living making rice cakes and selling these to school canteens in the town.

Police said some of Ingles' clients, who enticed their friends to buy phone cards, are now facing estafa cases.

Prudencio Meligrito of Dagupan City said two of his friends sued him for estafa after they gave him P530,000 each to invest in Ingles' business. Meligrito said Ingles owed him P760,000.

"They are running after me, but the money is not with me. They voluntarily gave the money which I gave to Ingles," Meligrito said.

Orduña said 16 complainants went to the CIDG office here when they learned that Ingles had been arrested. *Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

AP

DAY OF HEARTS
Two Muslim women display a heart cut out of cardboard as they wait for their children at a school in Jolo, where fighting continues between government soldiers and followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

Tanauan mayor owns Uzi, according to chief of police

TANAUAN CITY—The mayor of this city owns an Uzi machine pistol that was similar to that used in the murder of two waiters and wounding of another, the city police chief said.

Finding no excuse for his incapacity to solve the murder case of two waiters who were gunned down by this city mayor's bodyguard, Supt. Renato Angara, the chief of police accused the media of meddling with the case and even sowed intrigue among the victims' widows, this reporter, and the lone survivor who witnessed the crime.

"You media people are the reason why we can't solve this case," Angara said in Filipino, "because you reported the incident, the survivor refused to testify, and that's makes the job of the police more difficult."

On the night of Dec. 29, 2004, Mayor Alfredo Corona's bodyguard Rene Dologmanding gunned down Florante Mendoza and his two fellow waiters Arman Sandoval and Fernando Malipol at the Modesto Hall in Barangay Uno, this city.

Sandoval and Malipol were killed instantly while Mendoza survived.

The killer is still on the loose.

On Feb. 10, Mendoza, the lone survivor, filed charges against Dologmanding and testified against the suspect for the killing of Sandoval and Malipol.

Angara also denied the lack of police blotter report of the shooting incident on Dec. 29, 2004.

"We have the file here of the blotter report on the night of Dec. 29, 2004," Angara said, "the only problem is that it has no identified suspect then because the witness refused to testify."

On Jan. 3, 2005, five days after the incident, the Tanauan police blotter still has no report on the incident.

The suspect, who used an Uzi machine gun, has no license for the pistol.

Until now, Dologmanding is still out in the streets.

"But Mayor Corona has a licensed Uzi machine gun and he admitted that in public," Angara added, "Uzi machine guns are issued to police officers, but there are only very few of them."

As if the finger-pointing is not enough, Angara also sowed intrigue on this reporter and the two victims' widows.

"We're very transparent here. And I'm not afraid of getting relieved because I'm a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy," Angara said.

Malipol's widow Anna Marie was enraged with Angara's gossip.

"That is not true. How can we scold you when you were there to help us. I was also there when you talked with Eljie (Sandoval's widow) and nobody did any scolding to anyone. And Florante has already filed charges and testified," an enraged Anna Marie said.

"I think he's just doing that to make us fight each other and forget about the case. But that's not going to happen. We're in this fight together."

Anna Marie said she and Eljie were in constant communication while Eljie keeps on talking to Mendoza to help each other seek justice for the victims.

Between the two widows, Eljie was the one who was traumatized by the incident and scoldings she got from Angara.

"Angara has already scolded us for talking to the media. He said the media is the reason why they can't solve the case," Eljie said. *Mei Magsino-Lubis, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Security tightened for US troops in mercy mission

CALAMBA CITY—Security around a well-known resort hotel here has been heightened since members of US military forces, who will embark on a three-day medical mission and relief operations in typhoon-ravaged towns in northern Quezon starting today, arrived almost two weeks ago.

Aside from the resort's regular security units, uniformed and non-uniformed members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been deployed to secure the perimeter fence of the Monte Vista Resort in Barangay Pansol.

Guests and visitors arriving at the area are asked to sign their names in logbooks after going through strict inspection of their belongings at the resort's main entrance.

The rigorous security arrangement has also forbidden the hotel's staff from giving any information on their "special guests."

"As part of our arrangement with them, we were told not to give any information about them. We are not even supposed to tell anybody that they are here," a staffer at the front desk told the INQUIRER.

Security personnel also declined to give information on the US soldiers staying at the resort-hotel.

A Filipino soldier, who declined to be identified, said the American soldiers arrived at the area on Feb. 6.

"They arrived by batches," the soldier said.

He added that the American soldiers are barred from going out of the resort unless they are to attend official functions.

He said the US military units are scheduled to stay in Monte Vista until their relief operations end early next month.

Most of the foreigners seen at the resort's lobby yesterday were in civilian clothes. Others wore camouflage uniforms with "US Army" badges.

Some just arrived in the area and were busy bringing in their bags and luggage using carts.

Col. Jaime Buenaflor, chief of the Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade and the Civil Military Operations Task Force commander, said the resort-hotel would be the official operations center of the humanitarian mission. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BFAR to launch 'hipon ni Gloria' in Dagupan

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—The "hipon ni Gloria," a Philippine strain of giant freshwater prawn (Macrobracium rosenbergii, locally known as *ulang*), will be presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo on Saturday when she inaugurates different projects of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Research Center here.

Westly Rosario, BFAR center chief, said the *ulang* is indigenous to the Philippines and has superior characteristics such as 20-percent better growth performance, shorter larval rearing period and higher survival rate than other strains.

"Its use will optimize aquaculture production and income from the existing 14,500 hectares of freshwater fish ponds in the country (and) will spur the development of additional fish ponds in the next five years," Rosario said.

The *ulang* can be included in the culture of *tilapia* and other fish.

"It's about time we focus our attention on other species such as freshwater prawns because we have concentrated on only two kinds of fish—*tilapia* and *bangus* (milkfish). Freshwater prawns will give farmers higher income," Rosario said.

The center has been undertaking research on different strains of freshwater prawn from different areas of the country and other countries such as Indonesia and Thailand for three years now.

Field tests show the Mindanao strain, now called "hipon ni Gloria," has exhibited superior qualities. It will be endorsed by the BFAR for mass production by fish farmers, Rosario said.

Field tests have been conducted in Pangasinan, the Ilocos provinces and Laguna.

Rosario said the BFAR decided to call the *ulang* as "hipon ni Gloria" because "we started the research on it during her tenure."

The BFAR-Dagupan maintains a germ plasm (part of the cell containing hereditary materials) of different species of freshwater prawn for the use of scientists.

Ms Arroyo will inaugurate the Buhay Isdaan (live fish market) and the Aquarium building and restaurant when she visits the BFAR Center on Saturday.

She will also witness the ceremonial signing of the memorandum agreement between the Department of Agriculture and the Royal Norwegian Embassy for the environmental survey of the aquaculture areas in the country that are at risk from fish kills.

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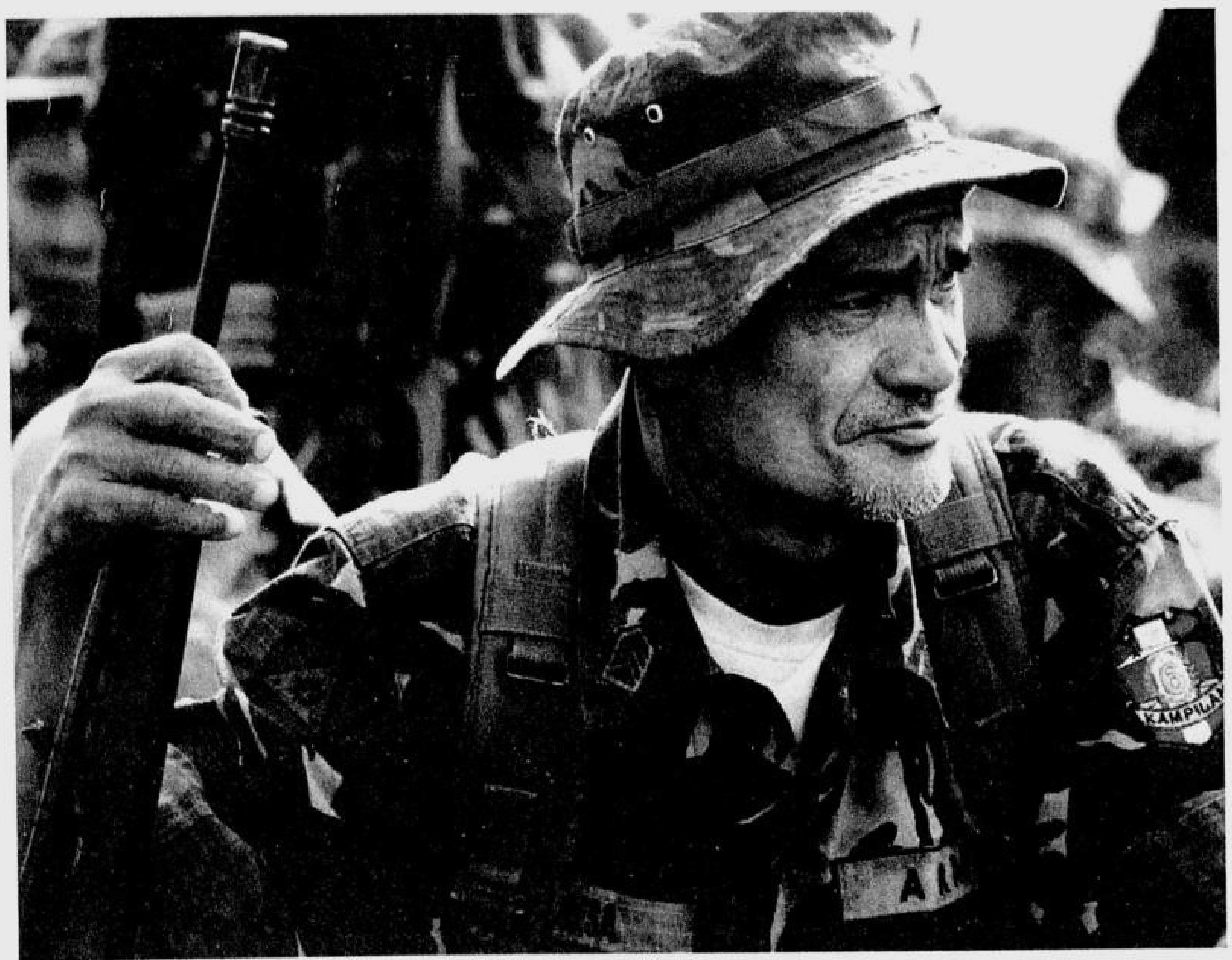

AN AGING soldier holds on to his rifle as he prepares for deployment to Jolo where government forces are waging war against followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

AP

Tight security in churches, mosques urged

DAVAO CITY—Archbishop Fernando Capalla urged the government to increase security in areas frequented by people, such as churches and mosques, to prevent attacks similar to the Valentine's Day explosions here and in General Santos City and Makati City.

Capalla, also president of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), said government response should be more effective and "immediate" in the wake of admission by officials that terrorists were only waiting for the right opportunity to sow more violence.

"We are alarmed by the almost simultaneous occurrence of the bombing incidents. It was an instance of a terroristic plan getting more highly sophisticated and supremely dangerous. Government response should be more effective and immediate," he said.

But while urging the government to institute measures, Capalla also called on the public "to be watchful and vigilant."

"(The people should) exercise utmost prudence and care as they move around and travel," he said.

Capalla also condemned the attacks by branding it as "maliciously inhuman."

The notorious Abu Sayyaf, blamed for several bombings in Mindanao and in the National Capital Region, has owned up responsibility for the explosions, which killed seven people and injured about 150 others.

"Such dastardly crimes are unconscionable because they clearly violate God's/Allah's teachings, and therefore should be branded as unChristian and unIslamic," Capalla said.

Even the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) condemned the perpetrators of the Velentine's Day explosions as "evil men."

MILF Chair Murad Ebrahim described the bombings as "the handiwork of murderers who feel gratified at the sight of deaths, destruction, and sufferings of others."

"We condemn this barbaric act in the strongest terms, this is a carnage that dehumanizes human life and dignity," Muhammad Ameen, Murad's personal secretary, quoted the rebel chief as saying.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the MILF was offering its help to the government as a manifestation of its sincerity in the peace process.

He said they were also wary that unless the perpetrators are arrested, their "evil" activities would derail the peace process. *Reports from Anthony Allada, Dennis Jay Santos, Germelina Lacorte, Jeffrey Tupas, Charlie Señase, Ferdinand Zuasola and Joselle Badilla, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Davao tourism execs say it's business as usual

DAVAO CITY—Tourism industry leaders here sought to allay fears over the Valentine's Day bombing in the city, saying it was just an isolated case and business was usual as far as tourism is concerned.

Industry leaders also sought to pin the blame on media for reporting heavily on the bombing and not on "bright things" about Davao City.

"We just want the media to know there are better things happening here," said Art Boncato, head of the Davao Tourism Association.

"The good news is that the organizers (of tourism events lined up here) are not changing their minds," Boncato told reporters at a press conference, attended by representatives from hotels, restaurants and convention centers.

Boncato said as many as 13 events, projected to bring in close to 20,000 tourists until October this year, have been booked for at least nine hotels and convention centers here.

They include the scheduled national conventions of the Philippine Association of Water Districts (PAWD), the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples, the Philippine Omega Cup Golf Tournament, all scheduled this month and the World Bank meeting with donor countries to the Philippines next month, among others.

But the tourism sector is rooting for the city's bid to host the Ad Congress, scheduled later this year. Boncato said before Monday's bombing, the only concern that Ad Congress organizers raised was only on the cost of holding the event. Tourism players have assured the organizers that they can easily iron it out.

"We don't want to talk about the bombing anymore," said Id Acaylar, Davao City tourism officer. "Just like the twin Davao bombings two years ago, we're only scared at first but eventually, business goes on as usual."

"The bombing has no impact at all," said Joji Ilagan-Bian, Mindanao commission representative of the Export Development Council (EDC). "They're just isolated cases, and it's happening everywhere, not only here." *Germelina Lacorte, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Man who raped girl, 13, draws 126-yr jail term

BACOLOD CITY—A 68-year-old "*mananguete* (tuba gatherer)" rom Cauayan town in Negros Occidental on Wednesday was sentenced to 126 years in prison for raping a 13-year-old girl.

Kabankalan Regional Trial Court Judge Henry Arles found Juanito Talanquines guilty of hree counts of rape and meted him a jail term of 40 years for each count.

Talanquines was also convicted of acts of lasciviousness and was ordered to suffer the penalty ix months to six years in prison.

Arles also ordered Talanquines o pay the victim P150,000 in indemnity and damages.

Court records showed that Taanquines was 62 when he raped he girl, then 13, on Sept. 26, 29 and 30, 1998 in Cauayan town, bout 119 km south of here.

The tuba gatherer was the neighbor of the victim who even alled him "lolo (grandfather)."

The girl had told the court that Talanquines was armed with a cythe when he raped her on hree separate occasions.

"The victim could not have houted for help as the accused was threatening her with the cythe used by him in tuba gathring," said Arles.

The judge described as "preposterous" the claim of Talanuines that the girl filed a case gainst him because she stole money from him to bet and was fraid he would tell her parents.

"It strains credulity that the victim would concoct a tale of ape against the accused, allow an examination of her private parts and subject herself to a public trial simply for such a flimsy eason," Arles said. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Mountain elders turn to tribal practices to counter El Niño

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

SAGADA, Mt. Province—Elders of Barangay Ankileng, considered as this town's rice bowl, will perform a ritual called *ob-ob* this month to ensure the continuous supply of water and counter the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon.

Jaime Dugao, Ankileng barangay chair, said the ritual has been a part of Sagada's traditional practices whenever drought hits the town's farmlands.

Dugao said the *ob-ob* is being practiced yearly when the dry season starts in the last week of February. The ritual is performed during the *kiagew* (dry season) and *kagang* (extreme dry season characterized by the non-availability of water).

He said elders here educate farmers on protecting and conserving the community's water source.

The ritual starts during the peak of the drought. Elders, most of them farmers, troop to the nearest spring to perform the ritual.

They bring an *alingo* (boar) to the ritual and offer it as a sacrifice. Prayers are offered to *Kabunian* (Supreme Being) to ask him to provide them with continuous supply of water to irrigate their fields.

Dugao said prayers are offered to ask *Kabunian* for rainfall.

"Elders believe that we need to talk to nature. After their prayers are heard, the people are advised to respect the water and use it wisely because it is God-given. That is why urinating near the spring or in the water itself is prohibited. People here make sure that their water sources are clean," he said.

After the ritual, residents discuss the equal sharing and proper management of water from the spring. Dugao said each farmer is asked to monitor how the water would be distributed and shared.

The system works by giving each farmer the amount of water he needs until the rainy season comes.

"We would always notice that people fight over water if they do not organize themselves. What is good with *ob-ob* is that it brings a sense of unity and cooperation out of people who practice this belief," Dugao said.

Ex-bar workers reclaim stalls on Angeles street

ANGELES CITY—At least 15 former bar workers, joined by more than 50 women from this city's poor areas, reclaimed their demolished food stalls on Fields Avenue here on Monday and converted it into their own food court.

Also on Monday, Valentine's Day, the former bar workers and supporters of their organization, the Nagkakaisang Kababaihan ng Angeles (Nagka), marched to the City Hall to offer 50 long-stemmed red roses to Mayor Carmelo Lazatin who ordered the demolition starting Jan. 17.

Wearing red shirts embossed with the slogan "Stop Violence Against Women," they left the roses at the stairs leading to the doorstep of Lazatin's office.

They did this when five policemen blocked them from proceeding to the mayor's office. Lazatin did not meet the protesters.

Also on Monday, Nagka leaders Erlinda Lampera, Nelia Garamay, Purificacion Gilbore, Josephine Tolentino, Maritess Daang-Foth, Novema Dingcong and Merlinda Delicano filed an amended petition for preliminary injunction and sought P3 million in damages from city officials.

Aside from Lazatin, the other respondents in the civil case were city administrator Alberto Suller and city engineer Donato Dizon.

The women's group Wedpro, through lawyer Evalyn Ursua, provided legal assistance.

By 1 p.m., the women were back at their demolished stalls and tended their makeshift canteens. They served meals to their regular customers, including retired American servicemen.

Lampera, Nagka president, said they would not give up their small businesses.

Inside glass-covered cabinets were food trays. Coolers were filled with beer and soft drinks and tables were filled with instant noodles, candies, cigarettes, biscuits and coffee.

Nagka members used a green plastic tent for temporary roofing. Salvaged wood panels became fences while broken tiles were used as flooring to minimize dust.

Lampera said their cooperative maintained the seven stalls on Fields after 1991 when the nearby Clark Air Base closed after Mt. Pinatubo's eruption that year.

Displaced by this twin disaster, the women got help from former Angeles City Mayor Edgardo Pamintuan, now presidential adviser for external affairs. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Third most wanted in kidnap list nabbed in Leyte

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

PALO, Leyte—One of the country's most wanted kidnappers has finally fallen into the hands of law enforcers.

Silverio Superable, 41, was arrested yesterday at the house of his brother Godofredo in Barangay San Pedro, Jaro town, about 38 km from the capital city of Tacloban in Leyte.

Superable ranked third in the list of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktaf) and carried a P800,000 bounty for his arrest.

Chief Supt. Dionisio Coloma, police director for Eastern Visayas, said the suspect had been linked to several high-profile kidnap-for-ransom cases in Manila.

Among these was the abduction of Dr. Gigi Dy on Aug. 19, 2003 in Quezon City. Dy was the sister of Meann Dy, national president of the advocacy group Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order (MRPO).

Superable, however, denied any involvement in kidnapping.

"I am innocent of this thing . . . I am not in hiding," he told the INQUIRER when interviewed at the regional intelligence office of the Police Regional Office-Eastern Visayas (PNP-8) Headquarters based in Camp Ruperto Kangleon here.

He said he had been staying in Manila for 10 years and worked as a security guard at the Safeguard Security Agency.

Last December, he added, he returned to Jaro to personally supervise a family-owned lot planted with coconut trees because his elder brother was not keen on manning it.

Superable maintained that he had a "good record" in the security agency and had received several commendations for his performance.

Superable, however, admitted that his cousin, whom he identified only as "Lupen" was into kidnap-for-ransom operations for years now.

"He wanted me to join their group but I turned him down. I have my family to worry," said Superable, a father of three,

Coloma told the INQUIRER that they learned of Superable's whereabouts from a tip by an informant in Barangay San Pedro.

He said a surveillance operation was immediately conducted to verify the information. A raiding team was formed after the tip turned positive.

The team was composed of elements from the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Pacer), Regional Intelligence Office and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and the regional police.

INQBOX
Question of the Week
A survey says that more Filipinos are unhappy with their lovelife. What can be done to make your lovelife happier?
Senders of d best 10 texts as publishd in Tuesday's INQBOX wil each receiv an "Inquirer Mug! U
Win this "Inquirer mug
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(Maximum of 160 characters)
*Metro Manila winners can call Jane at 8978808.
Provincial winners can text:
inquirer ad name/city/mailing address
to 2207 or 283 as their prizes will be mailed to them

Moody's rating ignored, hit by market players

From page A1

since Jan. 17, 2000, when it closed at 2,097.23.

The index lost 0.6 percent Wednesday after the downgrade.

"Both here and abroad, many felt that the downgrade was excessive," said PCCI Securities president Francisco Liboro, noting that Moody's justification for its downgrade was based on the country's fiscal condition as far back as the middle of last year. Many reforms have been put in place since then.

Philippine bond spreads tightened a day after Moody's cut the country's sovereign rating by two notches to B1, more severe than the one notch reduction expected by the market.

"We believe that the Philippines should have a credit rating of BB-minus/stable based on broader analysis of the various factors," said Dilip Shahani, head of Asian fixed income credit research at HSBC, in a research report.

STOCKBROKERS monitor share prices in the gallery of the Philippine Stock Exchange. PDI PHOTO

Positive recommendation

"From a trading perspective, we retain a positive recommendation on Philippines dollar bonds and continue to recommend buying ROP 25s and ROP 30s on dips," he said.

Moving forward, analysts are even banking on a credit upgrade once the government is able to put in place more fiscal reforms, traders in the country said.

Shahani said Moody's ratings on the Philippines should have been at par with Standard & Poor's, which last month lowered the country's credit rating by only one notch to BB- with a stable outlook.

For his part, Standard Chartered Bank's regional economist Mike Moran said S&P's action was "more reasonable," given the positive reforms in the country since January.

"Clearly this is a disappointment. BSP (Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas) chief (Rafael) Buenventura recently placated markets by suggesting that only a one-notch downgrade may be seen. He rarely speculates recklessly on issues such as this," Moran said.

"Nevertheless, we have seen sentiment hold up relatively well after the Abu Sayyaf bombings earlier and markets appear to be taking the setback in stride, too ... This suggests the market wasn't completely taken by surprise," he said.

Shahani refuted Moody's assessment that the Philippine political environment was "unstable."

"We believe the political landscape has stabilized following last year's presidential election process that was surprisingly peaceful. President Arroyo's return to power with a stronger mandate has allowed her to tackle difficult structural reform issues such as privatization of state-owned enterprises and strengthening public sector finances," Shahani said.

"Previously, President Arroyo's government lacked legitimacy since she was controversially elevated to the presidency from vice president by the court after ex-President (Joseph) Estrada was relieved of his duties," he said.

More skeptical

Shahani said Moody's view was "far more skeptical" toward efforts by the Arroyo administration and Congress to improve public sector finances.

While the public sector debt ratios—referring to government debt to gross domestic product and government debt to revenues—were still below the Ba1-Ba3 rating, the trend of these ratios had started to stabilize and would improve dramatically once the various revenue enhancement bills had been enacted, according to the HSBC analyst.

Moody's lowered the country's foreign currency rating for government bonds to B1 from Ba2. Bonds that are rated B generally lack characteristics of the desirable investments, while assurance of interest and principal payments or maintenance of other terms of the contract over any long period of time may be small.

Growing at healthy pace

"Apart from the fiscal situation's starting to turn positive, the Philippines has been growing at a healthy pace over the past several years and maintains a flexibility exchange rate system," Shahani said.

"As a result, Philippines' balance of payment situation is reasonable for a country in the Ba1-Ba3 credit rating bucket. The country has been running current account surpluses for the past seven years and will continue to do so in 2005, in our opinion," he said.

A Ba rating is deemed higher than a B but is still judged to have speculative elements and uncertainty of position and its future cannot be considered well-assured. Often, the protection of interest and principal payments may be very moderate, and thereby not well-safeguarded during both good and bad times in the future.

Carrot and stick

Moran said that in some ways Moody's decision cleared some of the uncertainty that was hanging over the Philippines for some time, noting that the threat of a two-notch downgrade had long delayed some investment plans.

At the very least, he said, moving the Philippines back to a "stable" outlook removed a degree of uncertainty.

"But this raises an interesting issue, a possible risk factor that needs to be watched carefully. With the government having long pointed to the threat of a double credit downgrade as a means of pressuring Congress into pushing through fiscal reforms as quickly as possible, the danger is that this 'stick and carrot' approach may lose its bite," Moran said.

Fiscal reforms have to go on

Moran said it thus remained critical that fiscal reforms continued on its current course as the measures passed so far were not sufficient to ensure meaningful fiscal consolidation.

"Any sign that reform inertia is creeping back in, markets will quickly withdraw their faith. As long as the Philippines can maintain steady progress in fiscal reforms, the impact of Moody's downgrade could blow over quite quickly," he said.

Most local business leaders shared the view that the country did not deserve the two-notch downgrade.

Former Finance Undersecretary Romeo Bernardo said Moody's downgrade was too much given recent favorable developments since S&P's action.

Moody's analyst on vacation?

"There was the removal of the Philippines from the FATF (Financial Action Task Force against money-laundering) watch list, excellent appointments of economic managers, good economic growth, good performance in revenue and deficit numbers, good export and remittance numbers, and the passage of the VAT (value-added tax) in the Lower House and likely passage in the Senate," Bernardo said.

"Maybe the analyst filed the report and went on vacation," he said." *With reports from AP and Reuters*

What 2-notch cut in credit . . .

From page A1

the international debt market, according to Salceda.

For this year, the government has already issued bonds amounting to $1.5 billion, whose rates had been pegged before the Moody's downgrade. "So in the short term, there will be no effect on what we already borrowed. But we will have to borrow again next year," Salceda said.

The downgrade will also make it difficult for the country to attract foreign investors.

"They may just choose to locate in another country where they can put up the same factory, produce the same goods but the cost of borrowing is lesser," Salceda said.

State department report

The Philippine edge over its neighbors in luring foreign investors has declined because of the government's failure to root out corruption, reform the judicial system and pass fiscal reform bills, among other things, the US Department of State said.

In its annual statement on the investment climate in the Philippines, the department cited for instance that English language proficiency, while improving in other Southeast Asian countries, "is declining" among Filipinos.

"The increasing US commercial familiarity with other Southeast Asian economies—most notably China and Vietnam—has eliminated some of the unique commercial ties that the Philippines once enjoyed with the United States," it said in the statement posted on its website.

Self-proclaimed crisis

The state department also said that the "self-proclaimed fiscal crisis" in August 2004 raised concerns over the country's economic stability.

Due to fiscal constraints, the government had "consistently failed" to invest in infrastructure vital to domestic and foreign investors, such as roads, communications, health care and education, it said.

"The situation has also led to government inability to deal with congestion and pollution in the country's major cities, most notably Manila," it said. "Trade infrastructure urgently needs attention, especially Bureau of Customs operations and the nation's maritime highway system, including roll-on-roll-off port facilities outside of Manila."

Direct foreign investments

Citing balance of payments data, the department said that net foreign direct investments (FDI) declined steadily from 1999 to 2001.

"In 1999, net FDI fell to $1.7 billion; in 2000, to $1.3 billion; and in 2001, to $982 million. Breaking from the declining trend, FDI increased to $1.7 billion in 2002 but again dropped to just $318 million in 2003," it said.

"At $330 million through September 2004, nine-month FDI had expanded by 30.4 percent from 2003, but remains low compared with net inflows of earlier years."

Religious scholar, actor-to-be . . .

From page A1

mander and 30 soldiers.

The notorious bandit is Zain Sali Jr., aka Abu Sulayman. The spokesperson of the Abu Sayyaf said his group was responsible for the Feb. 14 bomb attacks in the cities of Davao, General Santos and Makati that left at least seven people dead and hundreds wounded.

Deputy House Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salapuddin, former MNLF chair in Basilan, described Malik as a respected religious leader and spiritual adviser of jailed MNLF founder Nur Misuari.

Salapuddin said he last saw Malik at the signing of the peace agreement between the government and the MNLF in 1996 during the Ramos administration.

Spiritual figurehead

"I've known him not really as a commander but as a religious scholar," Salapuddin said. "He may be leading the attacks but not necessarily joining the fight. He is probably the spiritual figurehead of the Moro rebels involved."

Sulu Rep. Hussin Amin described the 45-year-old Malik, a graduate of Islamic Studies in Saudi Arabia, as a patient man. Before the attacks in Sulu, Malik chaired the Regional Unification Commission.

"He was active in bringing peace to warring families in Sulu. He is a man of peace. It is safe to conclude that Ustadz Habier Malik commands great respect and following not only in the province of Sulu, but also in the nearby provinces. He has the support of the people," Amin said.

The lawmaker chided the media for referring to Malik and his group as "Misuari loyalists" that gave the impression that the Sulu violence was a continuation of past conflicts between the MNLF and the military.

Turning point

Amin said the present Sulu conflict had nothing to do with Misuari who is undergoing trial on rebellion charges in connection with MNLF attacks on military camps in 2001.

Amin said his contacts had told him that the Sulu hostilities were triggered by the massacre of a family in Barangay Kapuk Punggol, Maimbung, on Feb. 1, 2005. Salip Paie, a relative of well-known MNLF leader Najar Padiwan, his pregnant wife and another child, were reportedly killed by Army soldiers.

"This was the turning point among the remaining MNLF members who for years have kept their patience in the face of reports of atrocities committed by the military in Sulu," Amin said.

He said Malik's group attacked Army soldiers on Feb. 7 to give justice to the victims of the massacre.

Abu Sulayman

The Sulu conflict took on a new twist on Feb. 14 when Abu Sulayman, the Abu Sayyaf spokesperson, told a radio station that his group was responsible for the deadly bomb attacks in the three cities.

Abu Sulayman said his group would not spare innocent people "to exact vengeance on the military" for its Sulu campaign.

Abu Sulayman's townmates in Lantawan, Basilan, said the 42-year-old Abu Sayyaf spokesperson was a civil engineering graduate who once dreamed of becoming a movie actor while still a student in Manila in the 1980s.

Another source said Sali had envied actor-TV host John Estrada, a fellow Basileño, who had made it big in the entertainment industry.

Lantawan Mayor Tahira Ishmael-Sansawi said Abu Sulayman came from a respectable family. The mayor described as a "very righteous person" the bandit's father, Zain Sali Sr., who is the current municipal assessor of Lantawan.

Wife's wrath

Sansawi said the elder Sali had warned his son that his wicked ways would earn him the wrath of his wife and children. Abu Sulayman's wife, a doctor, filed for divorce under Shari'ah law in 2002 owing to her husband's "irresponsibility."

By then, Abu Sulayman had become an Abu Sayyaf spokesperson. His ties with the Abu Sayyaf began in 2000 when he met with the group's leader, Khadaffy Janjalani, and Aldam Tilao, aka Abu Sabaya. The military said Tilao was killed in a clash with government forces, but his body was never found.

Actors as negotiators

According to a source, it was Sali's idea to get then TV newscaster Noli de Castro and actor Robin Padilla to negotiate for the release of abducted schoolchildren in Basilan in exchange for truckloads of rice in 2000.

But the source said most of the rice was later found in warehouses of some Basilan businessmen who had bought the shipment from an Abu Sayyaf negotiator. *Reports from Cynthia D. Balana in Manila and Nash B. Maulana, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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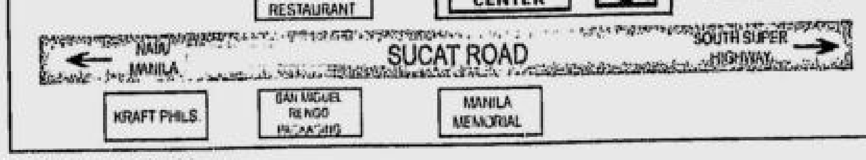

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Some 800 ex-Moro rebels in forefront of Jolo battles

By Cynthia D. Balana

SOME 800 Moro National Liberation Front integrees, "embedded" in three Army battalions, are at the forefront of the military force against the followers of ex-MNLF chair Nur Misuari in Sulu.

Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Gen. Edilberto Adan pointed out that this was one irony of the battle that, he said, had produced encouraging results for the government in its offensive against the insurgents.

"So far, they (the integrees) have been acquitting themselves. They are doing very well," Adan told reporters before attending the hearing of the House special committee on peace, reconciliation and unity that was looking into the conflict.

He added: "In fact, during the first few encounters that our troops in Sulu had, several MNLF integrees were killed and several more were wounded. We are saying that they are good fighters [and] they continue to be loyal to the government."

Three MNLF integrees were among the 71 casualties, according to Adan.

At the hearing, Adan dismissed the suggestion of Pasig City Rep. Robert Jaworski Jr. that a provision in the peace agreement between the government and the MNLF—which stipulates the integration of MNLF members into the AFP and the Philippine National Police—be suspended.

Jaworski had recommended to AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Efren Abu and PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay that surveillance be conducted on the integrees.

"Who knows? The soldiers and police may be sleeping with the enemy," the lawmaker had said.

But Adan said the AFP hierarchy saw no need for a loyalty check because the integrees had proven themselves to be worthy soldiers: "They are fighting the terrorists that are inflicting harm to their own communities in Sulu."

8 battalions

At present, there are eight battalions in Sulu consisting of 3,000 soldiers from the Army, Marines and Air Force.

Adan said troops from nearby provinces had been alerted for possible reinforcement if the fighting escalated.

He said the military had been able to establish that the rebels were followers of Misuari, founding chair of the MNLF and former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Adan refused to say whether Misuari was coordinating the attacks on soldiers from his prison cell in Laguna. But he confirmed that the military had confiscated Misuari's mobile phone.

He denied that the military had sparked the fighting with the massacre of civilians.

Pre-planned

Adan said the Sulu hostilities and the Valentine's Day bomb attacks in three cities had been preplanned and coordinated.

"From the military point of view, these could be diversionary activities [on the part of the MNLF] to ease the pressure in Sulu and divert government military efforts from Sulu," he said.

He also said the military offensives would continue unless stopped by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

As to the speculation that a third force was behind the revival of hostilities in Sulu, Adan said this was not possible.

"There is no such thing. This is a constitutionally mandated military action against terrorists who have been victimizing innocent civilians and attacking government troops, in complete violation of the peace agreements as well as our Constitution," he said.

Terrorist tactic

In Zamboanga City, General Abu echoed Adan's remarks and said he was convinced of the link between the fighting in Sulu and the Monday bombings.

"These were planned activities; [the bombings were] not a knee-jerk reaction. Definitely, these were done by the Misuari Breakaway Group and the Abu Sayyaf," he told reporters while visiting 21 wounded soldiers at the Camp Navarro Hospital.

The bomb attacks occurred when government forces were about to take the rebel training camp in Barangay Bitan-ag.

"They were trying to divert our attention ... It is a common terrorist tactic—[a means] to get public attention by targeting innocent civilians, *para mapahinto tayo* (to stop us)," Abu said.

But Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza said they were still looking for links between the Sulu fighting and the bomb attacks.

"Maybe the Abu Sayyaf is just riding on the issue," Braganza said.

Abu, however, said Misuari's followers would not go unpunished: "I will not let this one go away ... We will get them; we will not stop until we have given them the punishment."

'Minimal' damage

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said the damage that the fighting had brought to civilian and government projects was "minimal"—about P2.5 million.

Loong said some 2,600 families had been affected by the fighting, "but their needs are being properly attended to and the resources are enough."

However, Sulu Bishop Angelito Lampon told the INQUIRER that except for some families that had managed to get to Jolo, "we don't know where [the evacuees] are taking temporary shelter."

"What we were informed is that they are all in the interior towns, and we are really worried about their actual situation," the bishop said.

But Brig. Gen. Agustin Demaala, commander of Joint Task Force Comet, said the needs of the displaced families in the interior towns were being addressed.

He said soldiers had also been deployed to the evacuation centers "to ensure that [evacuees] will not be used as shields by withdrawing rebels, or that rebels will not pretend to be evacuees." *With Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Jolo evacuees don't want to go home

From page A1

enough food for 540 households—about 2,700 people—for three days.

Asri said that despite the fall of the fortified hinterland rebel camp in Bitan-ag, villagers were "still afraid of the situation."

About 100 to 200 gunmen apparently abandoned the sprawling training camp that had served as headquarters and home to rebel commander Habier Malik, who reportedly was wounded in a clash but was not captured.

Government troops were pursuing the gunmen, who had fled in small groups toward Jolo's mountainous center.

"There is no ceasefire yet. Anytime, the war could erupt. Nobody at the evacuation center would like to return home," Asri said.

In the town of Patikul, scene of fighting last week, evacuees who had fled their homes in the hinterlands lined up behind a Red Cross truck to receive rations of rice, noodles, sardines and soap, plus a pail for water and a steel cooking pot.

Schoolteacher Nahara Jaminuddin, 36, said she fled with her family after hearing mortar and cannon fire near her house and was now living in a family friend's shed.

"We are still afraid. There is no fighting now but we don't know that they won't have mortars again," she said.

Local Red Cross head Preciosa Chiong said some families might still be in the conflict areas where relief agencies could not reach them.

Chiong said her experience was that in such cases, people might be displaced from their homes for as long as three months.

'My people are dying'

The Sultan of Sulu has made an impassioned plea for a ceasefire in the region, saying its "once proud" people have suffered enough from decades of conflict.

Sultan Esmail Kiram, the titular head of Islam in Sulu and North Borneo, flew to Manila to plead with President Macapagal-Arroyo to halt the military action against the rebels in Jolo.

During a meeting of his interim Cabinet held in the backroom of a halal restaurant in Manila, Esmail said he had delivered a letter to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye last weekend and was waiting to meet with the President.

"I know she is busy," the soft-spoken 65-year-old sultan told Agence France-Presse in an interview in Manila. "But my people are dying."

In the letter, Esmail called for an international monitoring team to be deployed in the region to monitor any ceasefire, preferably headed by the United Nations or the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

"Personally, I see very little difference in what is happening today in Jolo from what was happening during the Marcos martial law years," he said.

The late strongman Ferdinand Marcos, deposed in 1986, crushed a Moro separatist rebellion in the South in the mid-1970s, after declaring martial law nationwide in 1972.

"Muslims in the Sulu region suffered a great deal under Marcos, which spawned the birth of the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front, which was chaired by Misuari)," the sultan said.

Although martial law was lifted in 1981, "we have been living under virtual martial law ever since," Esmail said, adding:

"If you look at our history, you will see just how much we have lost over the years. We were a very proud people once."

Understand the reason

The spiritual leader of Muslims in the Sulu archipelago—composed of Basilan, Palawan, Jolo, Tawi-Tawi and Malaysian-held North Borneo—said he feared the latest uprising might escalate.

"Although Habier Malik is a close personal friend of mine, I cannot condone the fighting. But having said that, we should try and understand the reason why the situation has reached this level," the sultan said.

According to Esmail, there was no investigation into the alleged shooting by government troops of a prominent MNLF commander and his family, which supposedly started the latest conflict.

This, he said, only underlined Manila's indifference to the local Muslim people.

"Most Muslims in the region want peace," Esmail said. "Since the Monday bombings [in the cities of Makati], General Santos and Davao, which I condemn outright, we are hearing all sorts of inflammatory talk coming from the government and military. Phrases such as 'take them out' and 'destroy them' don't help an already tense situation."

Most powerful

The sultanate of Sulu was established in 1390 by Rajah Baginda and rose to become the richest and most powerful in the region.

After the US occupation of the Philippines in 1898, following its victory in the war with Spain, the power and prestige of the sultanate diminished. Under the United States, the sultanate was virtually abolished and the sultan reduced to a mere religious figurehead.

Although there are said to be others who lay claim to the title, Esmail was proclaimed sultan in 2001 in Jolo.

Esmail admitted that the institution of the sultanate had lost "critical power" and "moral influence" over the years.

"That situation is now being addressed," and "the institution is being rebuilt," he said. *Inquirer wires*

ELITE group of soldiers trained by the US military patrol the perimeter of the captured rebel headquarters in Panamao, Jolo.

REUTERS

Man confesses role in Makati bombing

From page A1

bombing, National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon told reporters, refusing to name the witness or state his actual role in the planning of the attack.

"We cannot detail these in public at this time as it will affect our operations. We will be telegraphing our next move and our efforts will go to waste."

Helped get explosives

Television reports quoted official sources as saying the male witness helped the bombers procure the explosives used in the attack and joined them at their hideout at a mainly Muslim neighborhood in northern Metro Manila.

Conscience-stricken

The man was bothered by his conscience and walked into a police station in Manila early Thursday, the reports said.

The three bombings have been claimed by the Abu Sayyaf, an armed Moro militant group engaged in bombings and kidnappings in Mindanao. It is on the US state department's blacklist of "foreign terrorist organizations."

The group firebombed a Superferry on Manila Bay nearly a year ago, killing more than 100 people in the deadliest terrorist attack in the country. *AFP*

GMA backs Lacson antiterror bill, ID system

From page A1

The President did not specify her preferred version of the measure. "It does not matter. We leave it to the wisdom of Congress to determine what should be the details of the law," she said.

But she gave a hint of what she believed an antiterror bill should include.

"We must match the resolve of other nations on this score, as terrorists take advantage of the loopholes in the legal system that allow them anonymity and mobility"—a remark that appeared to be an allusion to the establishment of a national identification system, for which Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes had earlier expressed support, and to the mandatory registration of prepaid subscriber identification modules (SIM).

In a speech later at the 13th national convention of the Provincial Board Members League at the Waterfront Cebu City Hotel, Ms Arroyo urged local government units to adopt an ID system in their respective areas "while waiting for Congress to pass the antiterrorist law."

"It's important that the provincial board work on an ID system. One of the tools of the terrorists is anonymity and mobility. With the ID system, we deprive them of anonymity and mobility," she said.

No guarantee

But Ms Arroyo's endorsement of the antiterror bill does not guarantee its swift passage even though the administration coalition dominates Congress.

The measure was filed early on in her first term, as a reaction to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

In a statement, former Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III warned that a hurriedly passed antiterrorism bill might be a prelude to a veiled martial law regime.

Sotto reminded lawmakers that the reason the bill failed to pass previous Congresses was the lack of a definition of the word "terrorism" itself.

"Vigilant enforcement of existing laws, and not additional laws and additional executive powers, should be our first line of defense against these senseless killings," he said.

'Don't ease the pace'

The President also said she had ordered law enforcers to intensify the hunt for those responsible for the Monday bomb attacks.

"The dragnet is closing in on the perpetrators of the recent bombings in Metro Manila and Mindanao, and I order our law enforcers not to ease the pace," she said.

"The enemy is grounded in Sulu, and I commend our government forces," she added, apparently referring to the military victory over followers of jailed Moro leader Nur Misuari.

On Wednesday, the Philippine flag was raised in an abandoned rebel camp in Barangay Bitan-ag, Panamao, Sulu. The camp was renamed Camp Dennis Villanueva in honor of the fallen commander of the 53rd Infantry Battalion.

At the same time, Ms Arroyo said, the government was stepping up relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work in the affected communities.

"Peace and development will be restored [there]," she said.

The President was in Lapu-Lapu to inaugurate the Multimedia Telecare Center, one of the 5,000 e-governance terminals and interconnecting national and global agencies in e-governance.

Digital infrastructure development, which involves the establishment of telecare centers nationwide, forms part of the President's 10-point legacy agenda. The program has been allotted a P95-million budget.

Ms Arroyo said the digital infrastructure program was aimed at propelling the Philippine economy into the 21st century.

"This is important because it will help us fight poverty and the enemy, which is terrorism," she said.

'Everybody's responsibility'

In a conference at the Makati municipal hall with Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando and members of the Metro Mayors League (MML), Interior Secretary Reyes stepped up his efforts to push for the implementation of a national ID system.

All those present at the two-hour closed-door conference—including top officials of the MMDA, Philippine National Police, Makati Business Club and Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry—agreed on the adoption of the ID system as an effective means of fighting terrorism.

To make things clear, Reyes later requested the estimated 30 officials at the conference table to raise their hands for reporters to see.

"Terrorism is everybody's responsibility. We are calling on everyone to be vigilant," Reyes said at a press briefing held after the conference.

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, MML president, said an ID system would help police identify perpetrators. "We have a faceless enemy," he said.

Fernando said such a system would make it harder for criminals to commit crimes. "It's too easy for terrorists to do their act," he said. "We need a deterrent."

Of the 17 MML members, only San Juan and Marikina did not send a representative. All of the city mayors took part in the conference, except those of Malabon, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Mandaluyong and Caloocan, who sent representatives.

Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad, spokesperson of the MML, said a "Metro Manila ID system" would serve as the "pilot" and showcase of the national ID system proposed by Reyes.

"Each local government will pass an ordinance implementing the ID system," Trinidad said.

Asked about the legality of the proposed system, Trinidad said the local government's ordinance on the implementation of the system, if passed and approved by its local council, would be legal.

The Supreme Court had earlier ruled that such a system posed "a clear and present danger" and would violate a person's right to privacy.

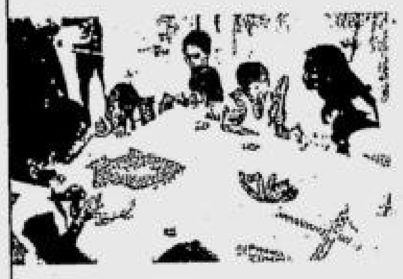
According to Trinidad, each local government unit was now studying ways to properly carry out the plan.

He said the cost of the ID cards would be shouldered by each LGU.

The proposed ID card will contain the following data; the holder's name, date and place of birth, names of parents, place of residence, photograph, signature and permanent ID number.

Trinidad said the card could also be used when paying taxes and in transactions with the different agencies of the government. *With reports from Nancy C. Carvajal and Irene C. Perez*

D-3830 Celebrates Partnership with Government in Nation Building



Rotarians from 77 Rotary Clubs in Rotary International District 3830 gather at the Philippine International Convention Center starting today for the 3-day Centennial District Conference, with the theme, "Celebrate Rotary!" The celebration comes on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Rotary International on 23 February 2005. The guest of honor at the conference is PRID Genshitsu Sen of Japan, representative of RI President Glenn Estess.

At the helm of the district is Governor J. Antonio "Tony" Quila whose home club, the Rotary Club of Makati, is host club for the conference, while RC Makati Poblacion is co-host. In celebrating 100 years of Rotary, Gov. Tony has called for a celebration that transcends the usual parameters of merry-making and festivity. He has invited Rotarians to celebrate their organization's signal achievement the Rotary way – through more Rotary service.

On this year of celebration, RI Pres.Glenn Estess has called on Rotarians everywhere to focus on three areas of emphasis: health, literacy and water. And D-3830 Rotarians, inspired and guided by their leader and mentor, Gov. Tony, have responded with enthusiasm and dispatch.

Health

In the area of health, Gov. Tony has chosen to concentrate club resources on doing battle with tuberculosis (TB), a highly contagious disease the incidence of which has risen to an alarming level in recent years. Realizing the need to arrest the spread of the disease, D-3830 clubs have embraced the cause, initiating Anti-TB projects in their respective communities. Dubbed "Stop TB 2005," the TB initiative calls for D-3830 clubs to band together to identify an initial 5,000 TB-positive adults and bring them to the nearest public health center for proper treatment. The prescribed treatment is the Directly Observed Therapy Short Course, better known as DOTS, which calls for a health worker to personally dispense a cocktail of drugs to a TB patient every day for 6 months.

Realizing that the TB problem reaches far and wide to cover the length and breadth of the country, Gov. Tony last year invited the governors of the other 9 R.I. districts in the Philippines to join the campaign to stamp out this dreaded disease. The result was the Rotary Declaration Against TB, which all 10 district governors signed in September 2004. And because the success of a program of this magnitude hinges on the support of both the public and private sectors, Gov. Tony has solicited the involvement of the Department of Health, World Health Organization, the Philippine Coalition Against TB and the US Agency for International Development. In time he sees the program expanding to other Asian countries and eventually to the entire world, firing up Rotarians everywhere and inspiring them to embrace it with the same passion and energy as they did the PolioPlus campaign two decades ago. Gov. Tony sees Rotarians coming together to cast out this scourge from the face of the earth until we shall have a world where the threat of TB is no more.

The district's health initiative straddles both sides of the spectrum: prevention and cure. While the TB campaign centers on treatment of the TB-stricken to arrest the spread of the disease, the nutrition program focuses on keeping people healthy and forestalling illness. Under the nutrition agenda, undertaken in partnership with Kabisig ng Kalahi, clubs work with the barangays to identify malnourished children and enroll them in a feeding program where they are fed nutritious meals and a glass of milk once a day for 6 months. To bring about the desired multiplier effect and attach a take-home value to the program, the enrolees' mothers organize themselves into committees that handle meal planning, budgeting, marketing and food preparation. The hands-on experience is further enriched by seminars and workshops on various aspects of nutrition, family planning and responsible parenting.

Rounding up the health program is Eye Care, under which clubs provide refraction services and donate reading glasses to public school children with eye defects, and organize cataract missions for the elderly. School children are also given Vit. A capsules under the Avoidable Blindness Project of the district.

Literacy

The core of the district's literacy program is the Reading and Math Academy which is anchored on courses aimed at improving reading comprehension in English and arithmetic skills of public school students. Following a carefully-programmed software, the computer-based lessons are designed to gradually equip the enrollees with skills and abilities that in time will give them an edge in the job market, especially in a world that is growing more and more competitive. To get the project going, Gov. Tony's home club, RC Makati, donated 20 computers and offered the use of the facilities of its Heather Kinross Center for Skills Training. The Rotary Club of Muntinlupa Filinvest is the lead club for this Centennial Literacy Project.

D-3830 clubs are likewise advancing the cause of literacy by building libraries and stocking them with books. For its part, RC Makati is doing its share by working hand in hand with other Rotary Clubs for the distribution of text and reference books, through its Books Across the Seas Program.

Water

In the area of water supply, Clubs are undertaking such projects as construction of artesian wells and installation of water pipes in the poor sections of their respective communities. Most of these water projects are actually components of the clubs' own housing programs or a tie-up with Gawad Kalinga.

One of the most successful water projects in the district is RC Makati's Water System Project in San Fernando, Pampanga. Financed by a US$190,000 3-H grant from The Rotary Foundation, the project is a complete water system that supplies potable, chlorinated water directly, through pipes, to an initial 300 households in three barangays. It was the object of a visit only last week, 9 February, by a TRF representative.

Other Priorities

Outside of the RI President's three centers of emphasis, the district has other priorities that Gov. Tony considers no less important. What is remarkable about all these projects is that they are undertaken in partnership with institutions and organizations that not only contribute to the effort but also increase their chance for success.

Awakened to the urgent need to reverse the tide of destruction caused by natural calamities, the district has built a tie-up with the ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Kalikasan for the Paul Harris Forest, a massive tree-planting scheme for the reforestation of the denuded La Mesa Watershed, a primary source of water for Metro Manila. The restoration of La Mesa to its pristine beauty is seen as an answer to at least two problems -- the frequent flashfloods that visit and cause havoc on the metropolis and the air pollution that threatens to choke the city and its 12 million-strong population. The Rotary Club of Makati Metro has taken the lead in this Paul Harris Forest Project.

An alliance with Couples for Christ bids clubs to push the Gawad Kalinga (GK) program by adopting a GK site and constructing houses for its residents. In line with Rotary's centenary celebration, 100 houses are being built in various sites to commemorate the movement's 100 years of service. Linked up with housing are the provision of a steady supply of clean water for the community and a drive to prettify the place with ornamental plants and to keep the streets clean at all times.

Prompted by a sincere desire to contribute to poverty reduction efforts, D-3830 clubs linked up with top companies to organize simultaneous job fairs in Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Taguig, Pateros and Makati that brought together prospective employers and job seekers to fill their mutual needs.

And they celebrated Christmas 2004 in a uniquely Rotary way -- by joining hands and hearts to respond to the appeal from District 3820 for immediate assistance to typhoon-ravaged Quezon province. In just three days, Gov. Tony and the D-3830 clubs were able to generate donations of P1.5 million in cash and kind and make arrangements for the transport of badly-needed medicines, foodstuff, linen and clothes by land, sea and air to Infanta and Real, two of the worst-hit towns. It was a classic example of the worst of times bringing out the best in people.

MESSAGES

CENTENNIAL DISCON 2005
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CELEBRATE
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100 Years

MALACAÑAN PALACE
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MESSAGE

My esteemed greeting goes to the R.I District 3830 on the occasion of your Centennial Discon 2005.

This publication, commemorating the accomplishments of your district in the past Rotary year, is truly in keeping with our mission to uplift the life of every Filipino. Through it, the public can recognize the selfless prime movers behind every community project that has been completed and gain a glimpse of your plans for the future.

Like you, I firmly believe that no task is so great that it cannot be solved when placed on the shoulders of leaders motivated by a common purpose and vision. We all need to unite towards the realization of our goal of attaining a prosperous and peaceful Philippines. I count on each of you to be one with me in this most crucial endeavor.

Sa ating pagtutulungan, ating makakamit ang lahat ng ating mga pangarap at adhikain bilang isang bansa.

Mabuhay!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Dear Rotary Friends and Guests attending the District 3830 Conference,

I send my warmest greetings to each and every one of you attending this 2004-2005 District Conference. I wish to express my great appreciation for the dedication and hard work of Governor J. Antonio Quila and Angela who, along with the District Conference Committee, have put together a comprehensive program of Rotary information, fun and fellowship. We hope that you will take this opportunity to make new friends, renew friendships with previous acquaintances, and above all broaden your Rotary horizons with an increased understanding of true Rotary service. This is truly a wonderful opportunity to Celebrate Rotary together!

As there are over 500 district conferences taking place around the world, you will please understand that it is not possible for Mary and me to visit all of the conferences taking place this year, as much as we would love to. I have, therefore, invited an outstanding Rotarian to represent me at your District Conference. Kindly welcome Dr. Genshitsu Sen as our representative. I know you will enjoy his company and his inspiring messages during the conference.

I have asked Genshitsu to encourage you to Celebrate Rotary in fellowship and service. With the combined strength of our membership, we can do tremendous things to help wipe out illiteracy, provide and protect water resources for all, promote health care in our communities and around the world, and support the Family of Rotary in 2004-05.

GLENN E. ESTESS, Sr.
President, Rotary International

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to our Centennial District Conference!

The district conference is always a very special event. But this year's is made more special in that it coincides with a singularly special occasion – the 100th year of our great organization.

Our watch, coming as it has at a most opportune and auspicious time, invites us to "Celebrate Rotary!" And we have, in all the ways we know how.

True to our tradition as a sociable, fun-loving people, we have celebrated with get-togethers and parties, dinners and lunches that have given us occasion to laugh, unwind and enjoy, to get to know, and like, one another. As we are all well aware, it is these seemingly light, trivial moments that connect us to one another with intangible but hearty bonds that grow stronger with every handshake, every peal of laughter, every bite of food, and every sip of wine. The more we like each other and enjoy each other's company, the more things we can get done.

That is why our celebration has lain more heavily in Rotary work. Our service agenda for this Centennial year has seen us doing our bit in poverty alleviation, nutrition, skills training, housing, health, disaster relief, youth development, the preservation of the environment, and education.

I am particularly heartened by the measures we have taken to push our three priority initiatives for this centennial year – "Stop TB 2005," a cause that we hope will move Rotarians throughout the world to adopt it with the same zeal and vigor with which they supported the PolioPlus campaign in the 80's; our Centennial Literacy Program, dubbed the Reading and Math Academy, that aims to upgrade the English comprehension skills and the arithmetic abilities of our youth, to give them a fighting chance at the job market and in life; and a spirited campaign for vocational excellence that bids Rotarians to observe high ethical standards in the practice of business and the professions, as well as in personal relationships.

What better way to celebrate Rotary than by doing the work of Rotary? Yes, the twin ideals of Fellowship and Service that brought us together in the past century, will hold us together for another one hundred years.
This Centennial Discon is a time for fun and bonding, but it is also a time for lending a listening ear and putting on our thinking caps to learn a little more about Rotary and about how we can all help ensure that this great organization we are privileged to be part of, will not only survive but thrive in the next century and beyond.

Yes, indeed, let us celebrate! We have a hundred and one reasons for this year of grand celebration.

TONY QUILA
Centennial Governor

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to attend, as Rotary International President Glenn Estess's representative, the District 3830 Centennial Conference, convened by Governor Tony Quila at the Philippine International Convention Center.

This year, President Estess's theme is "Celebrate Rotary," which commemorates the founding of our great organization one hundred years ago. At this juncture, the president has called upon us to think about the future of our organization as we look back with gratitude on its past.

When Paul Harris conceived of Rotary with three like-minded comrades at the beginning of the 20th century, the world situation was tumultuous with social unrest and lingering human distrust. In the midst of such conditions, however, the first Rotary club was created to foster true friendship and social responsibility in response to the challenging times. This is, I believe, the original spirit of Rotary.

The present world situation is not unlike that of one hundred years ago, and following in the footsteps of our founders, we work to bring to reality true peace and happiness for all mankind through our service activities. We have taken up the challenge to strive to do good in the world with the ideals of friendship and service as our guide.

Over four hundred years ago, my ancestor Sen Rikyu (1522 ~ 1591) expressed the spirit of the Way of Tea (tea ceremony) in four words, "Harmony, respect, purity, and tranquility." I have incorporated the essence of their message in my motto, "Peacefulness through a Bowl of Tea," which has guided me in my vocational service for over fifty years. It has been my deepest hope that through the Way of Tea, people can cultivate the spirit of humility and consideration for others, and thereby contribute to world peace.

The ideals of the Way of Tea have the same spiritual basis as the Rotary ideals of friendship and service, which are given new meaning and dimension by the yearly presidential themes. As we enter Rotary's second century, let us endeavor to create the future of Rotary by understanding our past and our traditions and by combining our unstinting efforts to improve the future. I earnestly hope that everyone will rise to the challenge of realizing our mutual ideal of "Service above Self."

I pray that this conference will provide the opportunity to confirm our Rotary values, to share in Rotary friendship, and to open new roads to the future. Congratulations

GENSHITSU SEN
RI Presidential Representative
Past Rotary International Director
Past TRF Trustee
Past Governor

Pleasant greetings to my fellow Rotarians.

There is much cause for jubilation as we celebrate this noteworthy event – our Centennial DISCON. It has been a century of upholding truth, fairness and goodwill to all. Another century lies ahead of us. But I am certain that the Rotary International District 3830 shall carry on our benevolent institution's legacy with the passing of each century.

I take great pride in the success of our prestigious organization. Time and again we have proven our commitment to the betterment of humanity through the numerous projects and activities we undertake. Rotary has always maintained a sharp awareness of our society's needs and has always eagerly extended a hand to help. It is a true demonstration of our dedication to the ideals of Rotary, of putting 'Service Above Self.'

In our Centennial DISCON, let us not forget the objectives of this benevolent institution. Let us honor our principles as Rotarians. Let us, at all times, Celebrate Rotary!

JEJOMAR C. BINAY
Chairman
Centennial Discon Committee

D-3830 Centennial DisCon

Highlights

Day 1, 18 February

- District Leadership Seminar
- Opening of Rotary Window Photo Exhibit & Centennial Bazaar
- Video Presentation: 100 Years of Rotary
- State of the District Address by Gov. Tony Quila "Rotary was an Oasis in the Desert," Address by PRID Genshitsu Sen, RI President's Representative
- Fellowship Night & Dinner -- Movies Celebrate Rotary

Day 2, 19 February

- Asian Clubs Fellowship and Action Breakfast Forum
- "The Challenge to Asian Rotarians," Remarks by Makati Mayor Jojo Binay, of RC Makati, Overall Chairman, Centennial DisCon
- Presentation on the Drug Menace in the ASEAN Region by PP S. Kulasegaran of RC Kuala Lumpur
- Presentation: "Stop TB 2005" by PP Puno Peña of RC Makati
- MOA Signing between D-3830 and the BIR in support of "No Audit Program" Campaign
- Rotary Spouses' Assembly
- "The Rotary Foundation: Making a Seamless World," Speech by PDG Bimbo Salazar of D-3780
- "How the World Views Rotary," Speech by RIPR Genshitsu Sen
- "The Club President's Reason for Being," Speech by PDG Sonny Coloma, RC Alabang
- "The Challenge to Philippine Rotary After the First Century," Speech by PRID Paing Hechanova, RC Makati
- "Rotary – On To the Next Century," Message of RIPR Genshitsu Sen
- Recognition of Commitment to Service Award
- Governor's Ball: A tribute to Centennial Presidents and the Centennial Governor

Day 3, 20 February

- Canvassing of Votes for RY 2006-2007 District Governor-Nominee and the Council on Legislation Representative
- Rotary Business Session

D-3830 Rotary Clubs

Alabang
Alabang North
Brooke's Point
Fort Bonifacio West
Las Piñas
Las Piñas Camino Real
Las Piñas Central
Las Piñas East
Las Piñas North
Las Piñas South
Las Piñas West
Makati
Makati Amorsolo
Makati Ayala
Makati Bel-Air
Makati Bonifacio
Makati Buendia
Makati Central
Makati Dasmariñas
Makati De La Rosa
Makati East
Makati EDSA
Makati Forbes Park
Makati Greenbelt
Makati Guadalupe
Makati J.P. Rizal
Makati Jupiter
Makati Kalayaan
Makati Legaspi
Makati McKinley
Makati Metro
Makati North
Makati Northeast
Makati Northwest
Makati Paseo de Roxas
Makati Pasong Tamo
Makati Poblacion
Makati Rembo West
Makati Rockwell
Makati Salcedo
Makati San Antonio
Makati San Lorenzo
Makati South
Makati Southwest
Makati Uptown
Makati Urdaneta
Makati West
Muntinlupa
Muntinlupa Central
Muntinlupa Filinvest
Muntinlupa North
Muntinlupa South
Narra
Narra Central
Palanyag-Parañaque
Parañaque
Parañaque Central
Parañaque East
Parañaque Lakambini
Parañaque Metro
Parañaque Metro South
Parañaque Midtown
Parañaque Multinational
Parañaque North
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Singer's daughter kidnapped, released

By Nelson F. Flores

ACTOR-SINGER Sonny Parsons warned the public yesterday about a new modus operandi of kidnap-for-ransom gangs preying on Metro Manila commuters.

Parsons, Jose Nabiola in real life, made the warning after his 23-year-old daughter, Laura, was released by her four abductors in Cubao, Quezon City.

He said his daughter was released unhurt following intense negotiations between him and the abductors although he stressed that no ransom was paid.

"She suffered some minor bruises but she was generally unhurt. She, however, is still in a state of shock," Parsons said.

"The negotiation was conducted through the exchange of text messages," said Parsons, who noted that the suspects asked for a small amount of ransom.

Parsons, a former member of the now disbanded singing group Hagibis and a former Marikina City councilor, said his daughter was waiting for a ride home early Tuesday evening along Sumulong Highway near Roosevelt College in Marikina City when she was abducted by four men armed with handguns.

The abductors contacted Parsons and demanded a staggering amount but later settled for P40,000 as ransom, an amount which he said, "I never paid."

Fourth shabu lab in posh village

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A LOVE triangle led to the discovery of another alleged shabu laboratory in Multinational Village in Parañaque City yesterday.

Police found the suspected illegal drugs factory—the fourth in the upscale subdivision—at the corner of Joy and Humility Streets.

Parañaque chief of police Supt. Ronald Estilles said P8 million worth of shabu was found inside one of the rooms of the house rented by a Jacky Yuen and his live in partner, Leah Porqueta.

Also found inside the room were chemicals and equipment allegedly used in the manufacture of shabu.

"It's a small laboratory compared to other laboratories, but it could still do harm," Estilles said.

Police took into custody two young children and the housemaid of Yuen, Editha Jardin.

The children will be turned over to the Department of Social Welfare, while Jardin faces investigation before being handed over to the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency.

According to Estilles, they stumbled on the illegal drugs laboratory following a complaint by an alleged former girlfriend of Yuen.

He said the city's antidrugs task force and the local office of the Department of Interior and Local Government were acting on a call allegedly made by the former girlfriend over police hotline 117 Wednesday night.

A neighbor told the INQUIRER that prior to the arrival of the police, an unidentified woman and the live-in partner of the alleged owner of the illegal drugs laboratory were seen fighting in the street.

"The woman asked if she was Leah and when she said yes, the woman immediately pulled her hair," another neighbor said.

The older woman, according to witnesses, pointed to Leah and told them that "this woman is selling shabu."

AN INVESTIGATOR walks around the house allegedly used as a mini shabu laboratory at the corner of Joy and Humility Streets inside Multinational Village in Parañaque City. ROGER MARGALLO

Residents of 3 towns threaten to sue Defensor over dump

By Volt C. Contreras

RESIDENTS complaining about a 3-year-old dump in Navotas have formally issued a warning to Environment Secretary Michael Defensor, saying he will be made to answer in court if he continues to allow the dump's operation.

A "Notice to Sue" was sent to Defensor on Feb. 11 by the groups November 17 Movement and Sining Yapak (Siyap), both members of the green advocacy network Eco-Waste Coalition.

The signatories said they would file a "citizen's suit" against the Department of Environment and Natural Resources if it continued to ignore their longtime demand to padlock the controlled waste facility in Barangay Tanza.

They alleged that the dump's operation—apart from posing health risks, polluting a nearby river, and giving off foul odor—was in violation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, or Republic Act 9003, since it had not been granted an environmental compliance certificate or ECC.

Currently run by the private contractor Phileco, the dump has been in operation since 2002, after a "Notice to Proceed" was issued the year before by then DENR secretary Heherson Alvarez.

Reached for comment, Defensor gave no signs that he would give in to the demand, arguing that the dump's operation was approved by the DENR before he took over last year.

He also said that as per monitoring conducted by the department's Environmental Management Bureau, the dump's operation has, so far, shown "no violation of our standards."

The environment chief also said the dump had also earned the nod of the National Solid Waste Management Commission, a body created to check on the implementation of RA 9003.

The notice to sue was signed by Romeo Hidalgo of Navotas, and Ludivina Mariano and Consorcia Ibaviosa of Malabon—the three of them representing the November 17 Movement. The fourth signatory was Evangeline Palacio of Siyap group in Obando, Bulacan. Lawyer Armand Mejia served as their counsel.

BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB Celebrating 100 Years SMART

MESSAGES

My warmest felicitations to the officers, members and staffs of the Baguio Country Club on the occasion of your 100th Anniversary.

A landmark and tourist attraction in the City of Pines, Baguio Country Club's invaluable contribution to the tourism industry cannot be overemphasized. With its excellent facilities and services to its and members and guests, Baguio Country has been the choice of many tourist visitors. The AAA rating by the Department of Tourism is a testimony to your high standard in quality of service and facilities.

As a tourist attraction, you have played a major role in the growth of tourism in the City of Baguio, which is one of the priority programs of my Administration. The tourism industry offers employment opportunities which are integral to our economic growth.

May this celebration inspire you to continue your quest for excellence for the benefit of Baguio City and its people. Together let us join hands to beat the odds and bring into fruition our aspiration for a reinvigorated tourism industry as a cornerstone of a developing economy.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

My warmest wishes to the management and staff of the Baguio Country Club as you celebrate your 100th Year Anniversary on 18 February 2005.

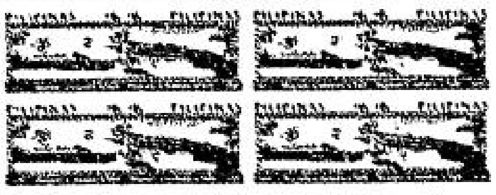
As one of the industry's pioneers, the Club has not faltered in its commitment of providing excellent facilities and service to the members and guests. Its constant aim to be the best that one in the industry can be has made the Club recognized as one of the largest and most prestigious membership resort Club in the country today.

Under the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, travel and tourism have been identified as major engines for socioeconomic development and sustainability. The government in active partnership with the private sector, media, local government units, and other national government agencies, is focusing its efforts and activities to realize its goal of 5 million tourists by 2010.

Congratulations to the Baguio Country Club for sustaining the tradition of excellence in the tourism industry.

Mabuhay!

JOSEPH 'ACE' DURANO
Secretary of Tourism



In behalf of the Board of Directors of the Baguio Country Club, we extend warmest greetings to all as we celebrate our centennial!

Our commemorative stamps are vintage photographs of the club that evoke nostalgic feelings of the old and the new Baguio Country Club at different points of its one hundred-year-old history.

For American architect Daniel Burnham, Baguio was "a poem" and the Baguio Country Club was a part of that poem. Our stamps clearly show this poem and the Club of decades ago where the skies were clear, the architecture American, the greens well tended, and the air was cool and bracing. Dean Worcester put it well when he called the poem that was Baguio "God's heaven."

We are truly blessed that the Club founded by the Americans in 1905 and destroyed by the earthquake and fire of 1990 has evolved into a Philippine pride and what we now call a "Paradise in the Cordilleras."

Together let us toast an institution that has grown stronger and better through the decades and made its significant mark in world. With God's blessing, the next one hundred years will be even more memorable!

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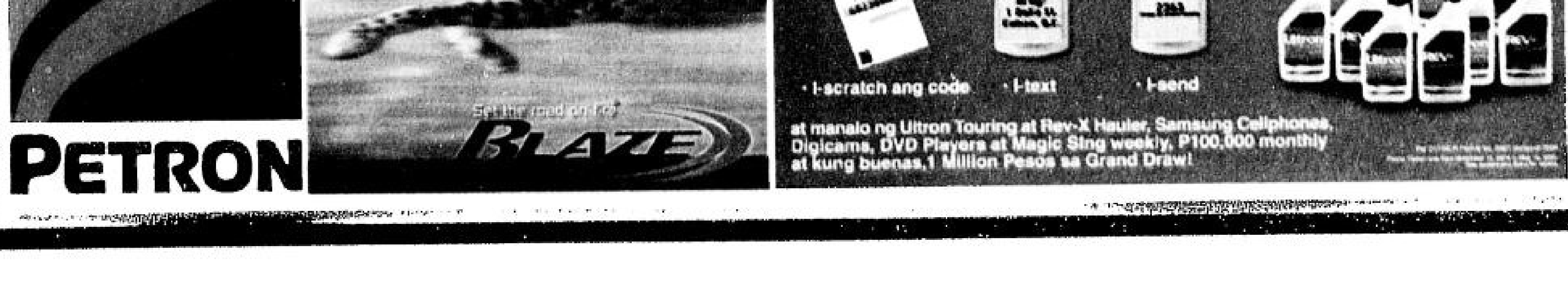

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TNT traces could link Metro, M'danao blasts

By Tarra V. Quismundo and Irene C. Perez

ALL FOR ONE. Mayors of different cities and municipalities in Metro Manila show their unity against terror. In photo are (from left, sitting) Jaime Fresnedi of Muntinlupa, Toby Tiangco (Navotas), Enrico Echeverri (Caloocan) and Sonny Belmonte (Quezon City). Standing from left are Peewee Trinidad (Pasay), Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Lito Atienza (Manila), Jejomar Binay (Makati), MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando and police Director Arturo Lomibao. *(See related story on Page A1.)* ERIK ARAZAS

TRACES of TNT or trinitrotoluene, a commercially available but regulated explosive material often used for quarrying or mining, were found on wires and cellular phone parts investigators had recovered near an RCCG bus that exploded on Edsa on Monday, according to National Capital Region Police Office Director Avelino Razon Jr.

The Makati City explosion followed bombings in General Santos City and Davao City in Mindanao on the same night, that altogether killed seven people and injured at least 150 others.

Southern Police District (SPD) director Chief Supt. Wilfredo Garcia also told reporters yesterday that they had identified the type of improvised explosive used in the Makati attack as TNT, adding that it was the same type as the ones used in the Mindanao blasts. Garcia said all three bombs were detonated using cell phones.

Other pieces of evidence had been unwittingly washed away by firefighters who had put out the blaze that followed the explosion, but Razon said Explosives Ordnance and Demolition teams were still able to retrieve pieces of the bomb.

He added that the investigation now involved the checking of previous bomb attacks in the country to detect any patterns. The bombings occurred 13 days before the first anniversary of the SuperFerry 14 bombing off Corregidor. The Abu Sayyaf Group had claimed responsibility for the SuperFerry attack.

One of the suspects linked to the bombing had confessed that TNT had been planted in a television set on board the passenger ship. The explosion killed more than 100 people.

As part of its security efforts, the NCRPO had beefed up security all over the metro, and deployed uniformed policemen on buses plying major thoroughfares. Police are also keeping a tight watch on public markets which had been identified as the next possible targets of terrorist attacks, Razon said.

Meanwhile, accounts from a new witness in the Makati bombing tallied with statements issued by the driver and conductor of the ill-fated RCCG bus.

Garcia said Marilou Jacaba, a bus passenger now in the hospital for treatment as a result of the blast, identified the man in an artist's sketch released by the police as one of two male suspects linked to the attack.

Police were sent recently to the Laperal area in Guadalupe in Makati where the suspect allegedly fled, Garcia said.

"Laperal is a depressed area with a concentration of drug users and snatchers," he added. "The residents told our men that the man in the sketch looked familiar."

Meanwhile, an augmentation force from the NCRPO yesterday posted a 24-hour watch on the Manila International Airport Authority complex, including the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the domestic airport, in response to a request from Angel Atutubo, Miaa assistant general manager for airport security.

Atutubo said random checkpoints would also be conducted on roads leading to the airport terminals, particularly at chokepoints such as MIA Road, Tramo, and Sucat Road. *With Nikko Dizon*

PUP street up for development

By Tarra V. Quismundo

FROM a side street to a park-like walkway.

Spreading the idea of giving sidewalks back to pedestrians in the city, the Manila local government is set to begin redevelopment work on Teresa Street in Sta. Mesa, Manila, a secondary street near the campus of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP).

After getting permission from the school community and barangays around the street, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza gave the green light to the city engineer's office to start the project.

"The welfare of the students is the primary objective of this project. It is the duty of your city government to find ways to make pedestrian traffic safe for students," said Atienza in a statement.

The 217-meter stretch of Teresa Street is widely used by PUP students as a route to the campus.

This would mean that the project would close the street to vehicles. It would also transform the street to a pedestrian walkway similar to other "pedestrianized" roads and streets in the city.

Leading the way

The four other "pedestrianized" streets in Manila are: a portion of Rizal Avenue in Sta. Cruz, the R. Papa Extension near the University Belt in Sampaloc, Tomas Pinpin Street in Binondo, and the Muelle del Banco Nacional and Muelle del Rio Linear Parks lining the opposite banks of the Pasig River.

Similar to the design of these walkways, Teresa Street would be re-paved with interlocking stone bricks, and lit with bright floodlights to make it a safe passageway even at night.

Apart from providing a safe walkway for students, the project also aims to boost business in the area, a goal of previous "pedestrianization" projects of the Manila mayor.

"We will even assist business establishments in the area in painting their facades to complement our beautification efforts," Atienza said.

The city government initially consulted local officials, the PUP administration, barangay officials and residents, before the mayor issued an order to begin the project.

Police nab suspect in teenage girl's slay

By Leila B. Salaverria

THOUGH she remains nameless, police are one step closer to getting justice for a murdered teenage girl whose decomposing body was found in Manila on Valentine's Day.

The main suspect in the girl's death, 43-year-old security guard Glenn Callo, was arrested Wednesday night, 30 hours after the body was found inside an abandoned warehouse at Pier 14, North Harbor in Manila.

Murder raps

Callo is now facing charges of murder and violation of the child abuse law for allegedly molesting another girl, in the Manila Prosecutor's Office.

With the main suspect behind bars, the police are now bent on identifying the dead girl so that her body could be turned over to her family, said Sr. Insp. Dominador Arevalo, homicide chief of the Western Police District.

Arevalo called on those who had missing female family members to verify with Manila police if the body could be that of their relative.

The girl was described as about 13 to 15 years old, 4'5" tall, and with shoulder length hair.

When found, the girl was naked from the waist down, wearing only a white sleeveless top. But operatives later found underwear, blue shorts and a pair of white and violet slippers at the crime scene.

The victim's skull was apparently bashed with a concrete object. She also had bruises on her thighs.

The girl's body was in an advanced state of decomposition. Police believe that she had been dead for five days before her body was found.

Arevalo said it was very likely that the girl was raped, but the police could not file rape with homicide charges because given the state of the body, no forensic evidence could be recovered that could prove she was raped.

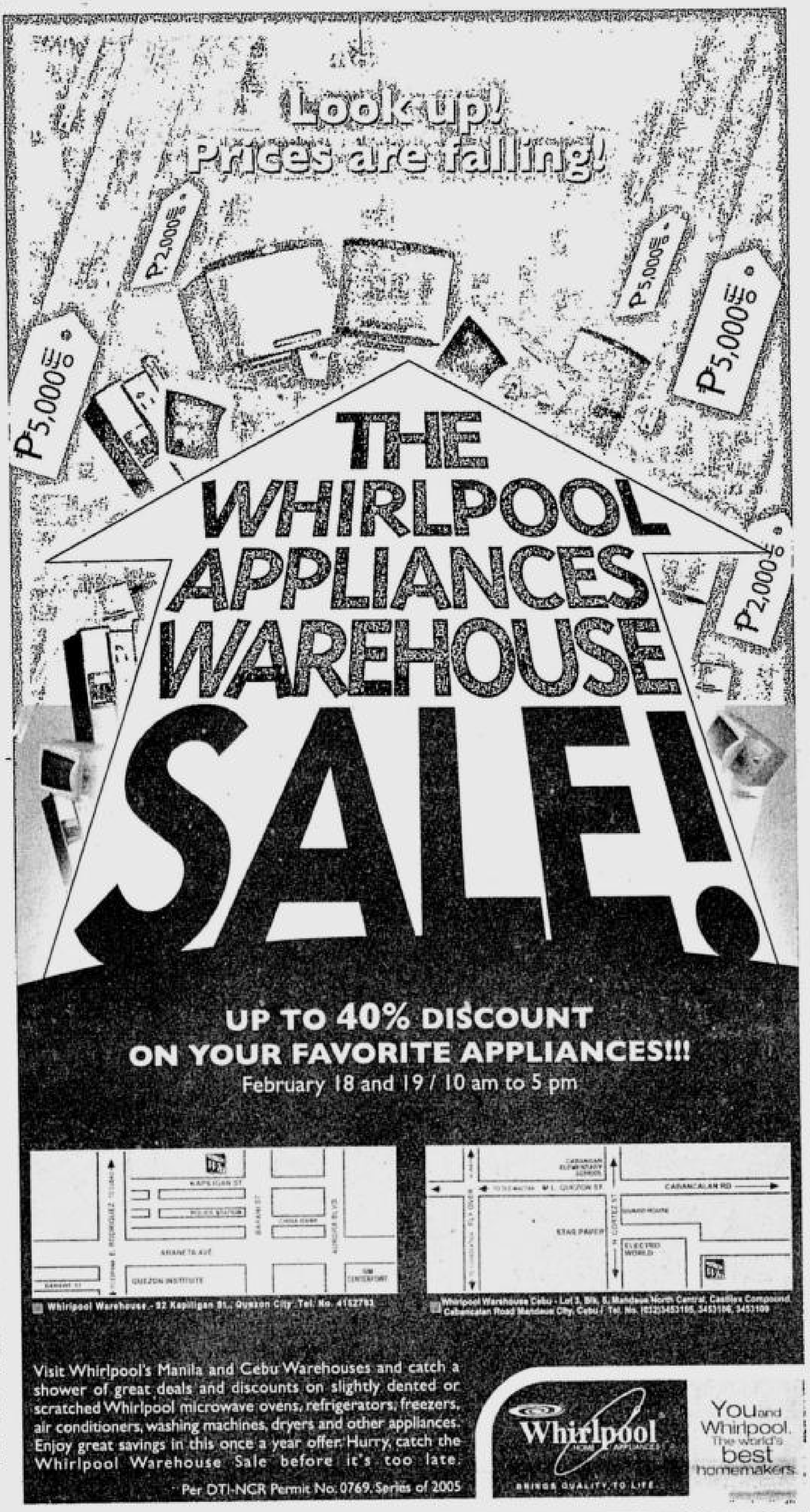
Back to scene

Callo was arrested after workers at Pier 14 informed authorities that he had been hanging around the abandoned warehouse where the girl's body was found days before its discovery.

The workers said the guard appeared restless, and noted that it was the only time he went to the warehouse.

Another witness also told police that days before the discovery of the body, Callo had brought a girl to the abandoned warehouse.

When the witness saw the body and told the suspect about it, the latter brushed it off, saying the girl was not dead but was only sleeping.



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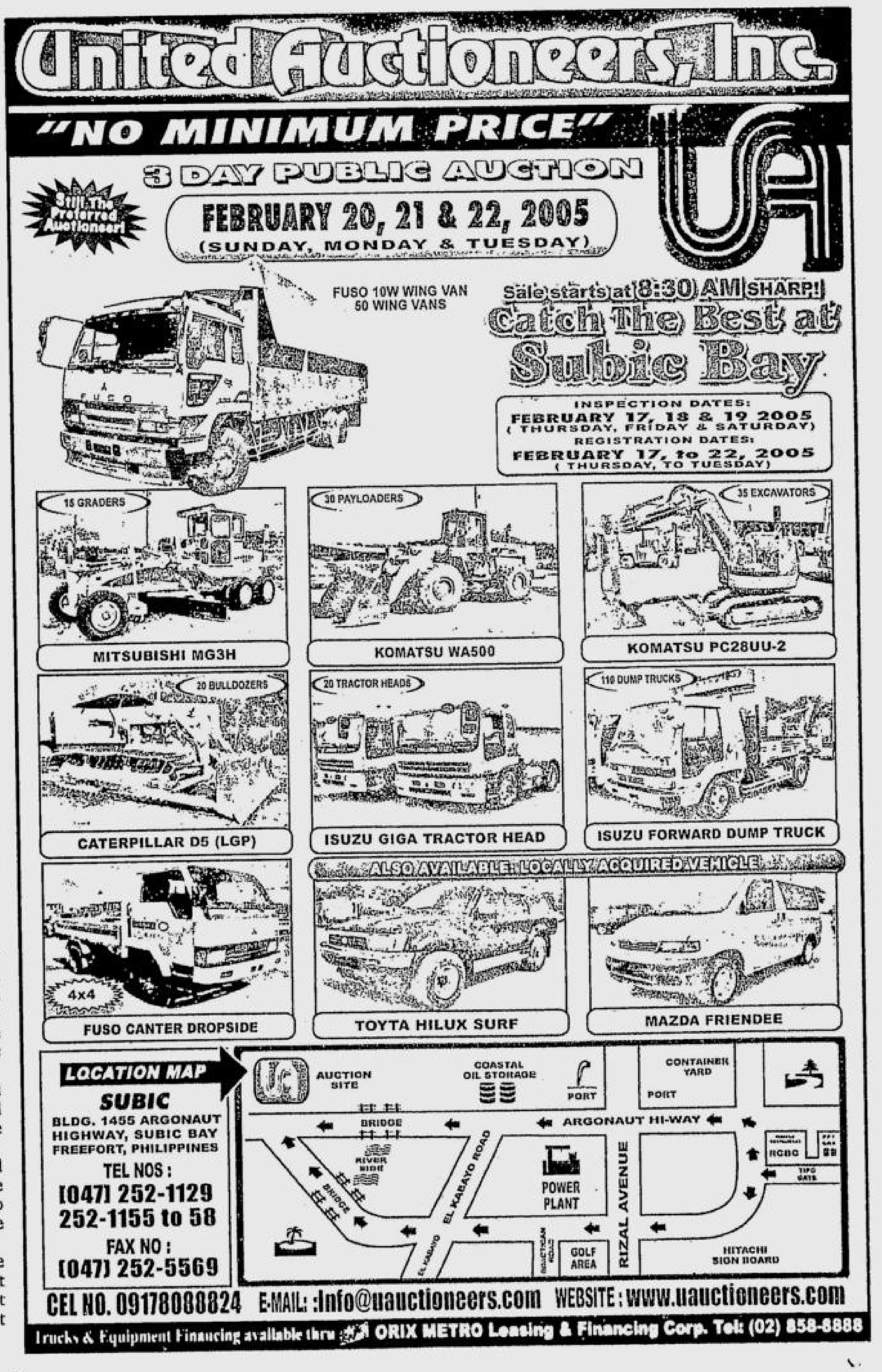

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SPORTS TV

GOLF: Asian Tour 2005 - Malaysian Open; 3:30 p.m.; STAR Sports - Find out if Angelo Que can make the cut as the second round begins.

BASKETBALL: NBA—Cavs vs T-Wolves; 9 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports; Mavs vs Suns; 11:30 a.m. (r-11 p.m.); STAR Sports—King James tries to upend reigning MVP Kevin Garnett as Cleveland takes on Minnesota while Dirk reunites with teammate Steve Nash in the Dallas-Phoenix clash.

Compiled by L. Manguiat

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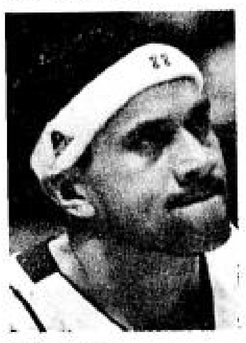
DOJ steps up pressure on Asi

Gonzalez creates panel to pursue raps vs suspended Talk 'N Text cager

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday created a panel of prosecutors that will decide whether to pursue criminal charges against Talk 'N Text cager Asi Taulava for allegedly faking his Filipino citizenship.

GONZALEZ


TAULAVA

Taulava's lawyer, however, said the Department of Justice cannot conduct an impartial investigation of Taulava since Gonzalez has already prejudged the case.

Gonzalez said he created a three-man panel to conduct a preliminary inquiry into the National Bureau of Investigation complaint against Taulava and the others who allegedly helped him fake his citizenship papers.

"(The panel) is hereby constituted to conduct the preliminary investigation of the complaint for falsification of documents, perjury, and infidelity in the custody of documents... and if evidence warrants, to file the appropriate information in court and to prosecute the same," Gonzalez said in a department order.

He also ordered the panel to subpoena Taulava and eight others to shed light on the charges against the player. One of those to be subpoenaed is reportedly a son of former House Deputy Speaker Raul Daza.

The panel will be chaired by State Prosecutor Edwin Dayog with State Prosecutors Paulino Gallegos and Lourdes Zapanta as members. Gonzalez directed them to start their investigation within 10 days.

Subpoenas for eight

Besides Taulava, the other people to be subpoenaed are his mother Pauline, a Sergio Madoranda, Lydia Hatton Medici, Rolando Bulasan Bersamin, Jonas-Karl Perez, Yuri Del Valle Sr., an alias Boy Daza and Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Noli Eala.

The DOJ wants Medici to explain her claim that her family employed Taulava's grandmother, an Ana Hernandez, as a househelp in the late 1940s. Bersamin claimed that he was a playmate of Taulava's mother in San Jose, Samar.

Del Valle was San Jose's municipal registrar while Daza, said to be a son of former Rep. Daza, allegedly helped in forging the papers of Taulava's mother.

Taulava's camp claims that Pauline was born in San Jose, Bobon, Samar to Hernandez and Felipe Mateaki, but the NBI said they also have no records of her birth in Bobon.

Gonzalez said the NBI has also checked with the National Statistics Office and the municipal registrar of Bobon, Samar and found no records of marriage between Hernandez and Mateaki.

However, lawyer Eduardo Francisco, Taulava's counsel, yesterday questioned Gonzalez's creation of the panel, saying the Justice secretary has already prejudged Taulava in "the many press releases the DOJ had issued" and in his advice to Eala to continue to deny Taulava his "contractual right to play in the PBA."

Impartiality doubted

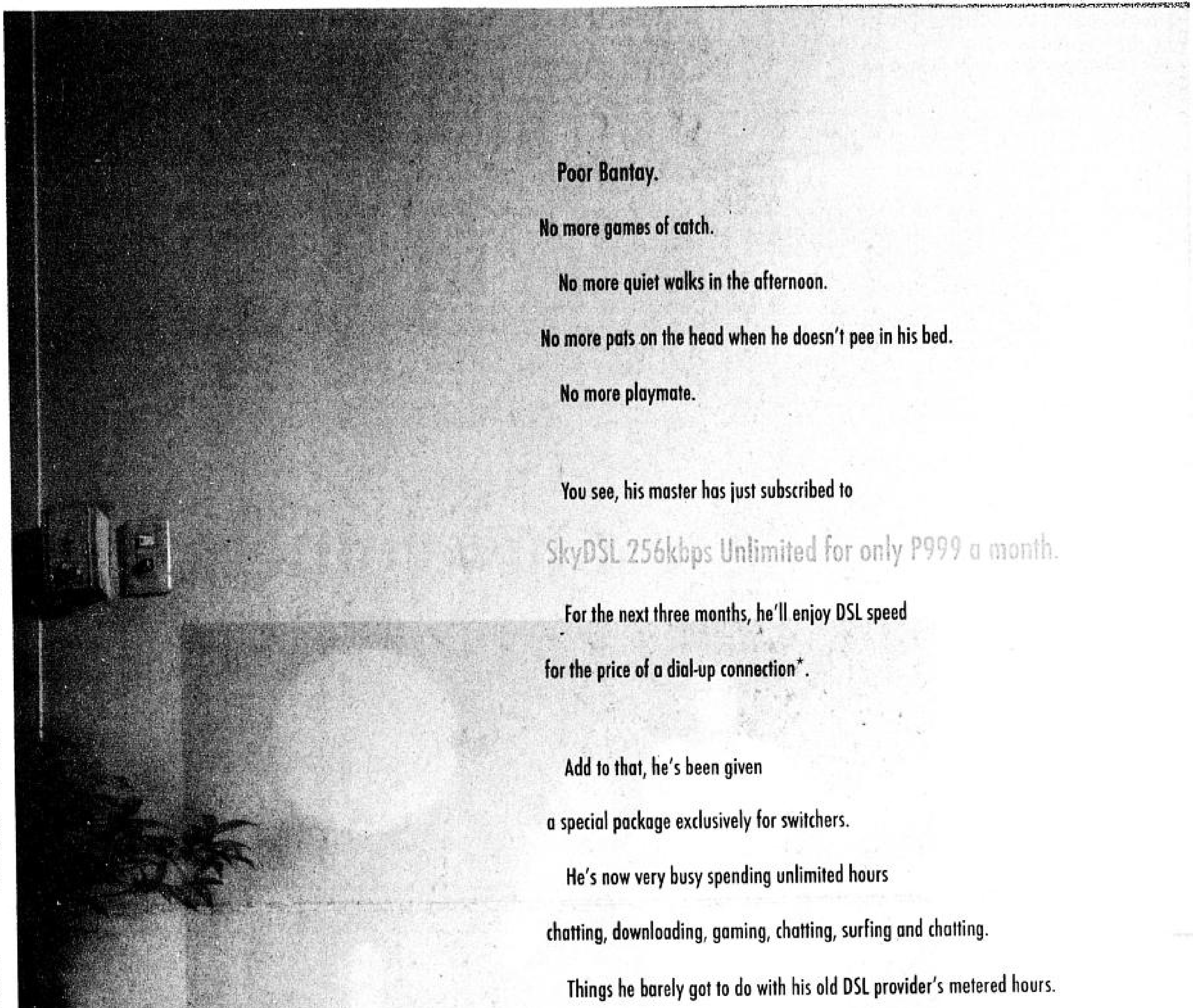
"Secretary Gonzalez has all but crucified Asi in his press releases," said Francisco. "Now, how can we expect him and his subordinates to be impartial—a requisite of preliminary inquiries—in investigating Asi?

"Even if the members of this panel should find no grounds to file criminal charges against Asi, isn't it a fact that it is the DOJ chief who reviews all of the resolutions of state prosecutors?

"At the same time, how can the prosecutors be impartial to Asi when their boss, Secretary Gonzalez, has been going about town like a Roman soldier nailing Asi to every cross he can find in keeping with the Lenten season?" Francisco added.

The counsel said the initiation of criminal charges against Taulava is the DOJ chief's way of circumventing a decision of the Regional Trial Court of Manila permanently stopping the DOJ and the Bureau of Immigration from stripping Taulava of his Filipino citizenship.

"Secretary Gonzalez is just feigning ignorance that the Manila RTC decision, though on appeal before the Court of Appeals, is still in effect," said Francisco. "He is going around that order while grandstanding about this criminal investigation he initiated."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Warriors, Maroons thwart NCAA rivals

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE UNIVERSITY of the East Warriors leaned on the spunky performances of two rookies to stun the San Beda Lions, 60-55, yesterday in the Collegiate Championship Cup at the Letran Gym.

Forward Mark Borboran and guard Bonifacio Custodio scored the Warriors' final 10 points.

"It was a big win for us because majority of the San Beda players are veterans," said UE coach Dindo Pumaren. "We decided not to use our veterans—(Paolo) Hubalde and (KG) Canaleta—so that our new players will have more exposure."

Custodio led UE with 14 points, while the 6-foot-5 Borboran finished with 11.

In the second game, University of the Philippines completed a sweep for the UAAP squads as the Maroons routed the Letran Knights, 52-41.

UE will battle University of Cebu in the next round, while UP will clash with Ateneo in this knockout-style tournament.

Trailing 50-52 in the final two minutes, Borboran buried a triple to lift the Warriors, 53-52. But Yousif Aljamal completed a three-point play to swing the lead back to the Lions, 55-53. A Custodio layup later tied the ballgame, 55-55.

The turning point came when Luis Palaganas, who chipped in 11 points, stole off James Hudencial to set up Borboran for an easy basket, 57-55, with 46.7 seconds remaining.

Aljamal missed two straight three-point attempts and the Lions committed a turnover in the closing seconds. Custodio then cushioned the Warriors' advantage by sinking three of his four freethrows.

Jerome Paterno led the Lions' attack with 16 points and 17 rebounds.

The Maroons led by as many as 16 points, 37-21, in the third period but fouls defanged UP veterans Aby Santos, Toti Almeda and Josant Cervantes, who paced UP's balanced offense with 11 points.

The Knights moved within four points, 43-39, early in the fourth quarter but the Maroons took advantage of their trips to the foul line to regain a double-digit lead, 49-39.

The Knights had a woeful offense, shooting only 19 percent at the floor.

The scores:

First Game

UE 60—Custodio 14, Borboran 12, Palaganas 11, Labagala 8, Lapena 7, Arellano 5, Saguindel 2, Lopez 1, Alastoy 0, Raymundo 0, Canizarez 0.

SAN BEDA 55—Paterno 16, Aljamal 15, Bombeo 8, Angeles 7, Cordero 4, Soriano 2, Arbole 2, Bughao 1, Timonera 0, Cruz 0, Hudencial 0, Yousif 0.

Quarters: 18-15, 25-28, 40-42, 60-55.

Second Game

UP 52—Cervantes 11, David 9, Epres 7, Santos 6, Ibañes 6, Cruz 5, Ferrer 4, Agbayani 2, Buyco 2, Almeda 0, Ortega 0.

LETRAN 41—Aldave 19, Alcaraz 5, Aban 5, Andaya 4, Anabo 4, Bautista 3, Mondragon 1, Balneg 0, Rodriguez 0, Pinera 0, Quiday 0.

Quarters: 15-9, 31-19, 40-31, 52-41.

GAMES TOMORROW (*FEU Gym*)
2 p.m.—UE vs University of Cebu
4 p.m.—UP vs Ateneo

Purefoods taps 7-4 NBA veteran

By June Navarro

A SKYSCRAPER of a man who played in the National Basketball Association may yet become the biggest attraction in the reinforced conference of the Philippine Basketball Association.

At 7 feet 4 inches, Priest Lauderdale will be the tallest import in league history when the former Denver Nuggets center suits up for the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs in the import-spiced second conference beginning March 4.

Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio said Lauderdale, who had a brief two-season stint in the NBA, is expected to arrive tomorrow after a long flight from Bulgaria.

"He's the player that we need to man the middle," said Gregorio, who expects Lauderdale to strengthen the TJ Hotdogs' frontline composed of Jun Limpot, Kerby Raymundo and Richard Yee.

"I'm sure he (Lauderdale) will complement the game of the locals," Gregorio added. "He's agile and quick for his size. I just hope he's in shape."

The 31-year-old tower, who was granted with Bulgarian citizenship roughly four months ago, debuted in the NBA with the Atlanta Hawks during the 1996-97 season. He was traded to the Nuggets the following season.

After a three-year hiatus from pro basketball (1999-2001), Lauderdale revived his career in the European league (2002-2005), playing for a couple of teams in the region before finally landing a job in Bulgaria.

Shell also expressed its intention to sign up an import standing no less than seven feet.

Coach Leo Austria said negotiations are ongoing for the acquisition of NBA veteran Eric Chenowith, a 7-foot-1 banger out of Kansas University in the US NCAA Division I.

The 25-year-old Chenowith was picked by the New York Knicks during the 2002 draft but transferred to the LA Lakers after two seasons.

"The ideal import is a 6-11 power forward who could lead the team in scoring. But with a 7-foot-1 like Chenowith around, at least we can clash head-on with the bigger teams in the league," said Austria.

The entry of tall foreign cagers was the result of a PBA board decision last year allowing teams to hire imports without height restrictions.

NBC PRE-SEASON

Spring, Taguig test newcomers

THE NBC's top two North teams—Spring Cooking Oil-backed Laguna Spring and Forward Taguig—get to test the mettle of expansion teams Valencia City and Pampanga and the Cagayan de Oro Stars in separate NBC-Sulpicio Lines pre-season basketball series starting late this month.

Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda's Pampanga squad collides with Mayor Freddie Tinga's Forward Taguig in a home-and-away series last week of this month.

Down south, the Spring of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ning-ning" Lazaro will play back-to-back games against Valencia City on March 8-9 to cap Bukidnon's Kaamulan Festival.

Valencia Mayor Jose Galario Jr. is excited about the games, which formally kick off his team's preparations for the NBC national championship starting on April 1.

"Our people are also excited," said Galario. "These games will gauge how our team will fare in the tournament proper."

City sports coordinator Rico Ocho bared that Valencia's tryouts are about to end.

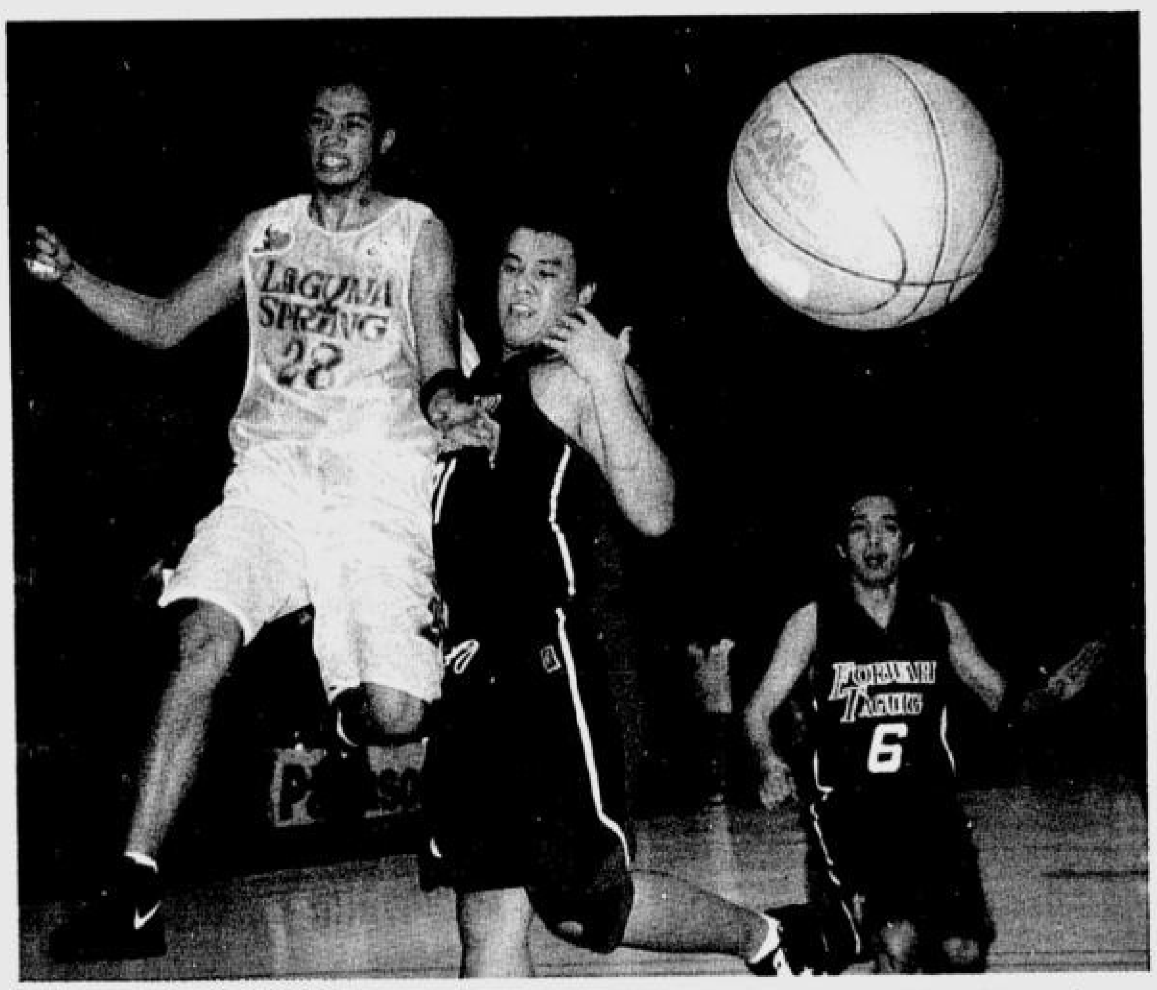
"We expect to hire a seasoned coach shortly," he added.

Spring is also slated to meet the Cagayan de Oro Stars thrice after the series with Valencia—on March 11 in Kibawe, Bukidnon and on March 12 and 13 in the Stars' homecourt.

NBC Find of the Year Julius Navales leads the Stars of former Misamis Oriental governor Antonio Calingin. All-Star Jayson Alfeche, Ram-J Numeran and Andrew Neri are still around to support Navales.

Laguna lost to defending champion Tribu Sugbu (Cebu Tribes) in the NBC-Panasonic Cup pre-season finals in Cebu last month.

Last year's losing finalist Forward Taguig finished third.



NBC's top two Northern teams (above) go up against the league's expansion squads late this month.

RP five bets cut down to 18 next month

THE 39 pro players in the Philippine training pool return to the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center on Feb. 23 for a four-day workout before national coach Chot Reyes meets with his staff to decide on the final 18, less than four weeks to the first PBA pocket tournament set March 27.

Reyes has allowed the players to return to their ball clubs to prepare for the season's second conference which starts on March 4, but had asked them to come back next Wednesday.

"We plan to make the cut by the end of February and come out with the announcement maybe by March 2, depending on on the preference of commissioner Noli Eala," Reyes said.

Letters have been sent to the players and their respective teams, including Philippine Cup finalists Barangay Ginebra and Talk 'N Text, informing them of the new schedule.

"I've spoken with coach Siot (Tanquingcen of Barangay Ginebra) and team manager Ricky Vargas (of TNT) and both have assured me their players will be there," said Reyes.

Eala and Reyes, along with Cebuana Lhuillier team owner Jean Henri Lhuillier, who is in charge of forming the RP-Asian Games squad for the Qatar Asiad next year, were to meet late yesterday to discuss, among others, possible "areas of integration" between the two squads.

Reyes said whatever will be discussed will be presented to the PBA board of governors.

SPORTSWATCH

Caidic makes perfect copy for 3-pt shooting program

CAIDIC

SLAM dunks and acrobatic shots please the fans, but three-pointers win games. Ask Allan Caidic and he'll readily agree. He is, after all, the Philippine's foremost exponent of the triple as a lethal basketball weapon during his heydays. Fondly nicknamed The Triggerman, Caidic still holds the Philippine Basketball Association record of 17 triples and most points for a local (79) in a game. No wonder, Caidic needed little convincing to become the prime endorser of a nationwide three-point shootout challenge launched by Accel. The three-year program aims to support and promote the basketball sports industry, specifically through the revival of the interest on the waning art of long-range shooting. Accel officials believe that young local players should improve on their three-point shooting if the Philippines hopes to beat Asian powerhouses China, South Korea and Japan. Remember that it was the three-point shooting of Caidic and naturalized Filipino Chip Engelland which carried the Philippine team to a historic victory and the title over Team USA in the Jones Cup. In recent years, Team USA has lost its aura of invincibility mainly because it couldn't match the outside sniping of some European teams. The Accel 3-point shootout challenge will be launched at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow at the Loyola School of Physical Education Gym of the Ateneo de Manila University. Featured activities include a 3-point shootout challenge for the 15-and-under and 16-19 categories and a 3-point shootout between Ateneo faculty and the school's female students. Accel president Willy Ortiz will deliver the welcome remarks in the event which will also feature tennis, golf and football fun games.

Lim-Medios paces 12-leg AOY race

ON TRACK for his third Angler of the Year title, Edmund Lim and teammate Gilbert Medios grabbed the early lead in the 12-leg AOY race of the Philippine Game Fishing Foundation (PGFF) when they hooked 32 largemouth bass, including the heaviest (3.954 kg), and topped the AH Lingayo Surveying and Fairways Cargo Movers bassfishing tournament recently at Lumot Lake, Cavinti. Catch Santos and Bong Nery placed second on 28 bass, 7.999 kg against the champions' 10.863 kg. Boy Bolos and Benedict Lim wound up third with 21 bass. The 20 bassfishers caught 130 bass weighing 39.014 kg.

Junior Achievement golf tilt March 4

THE JUNIOR Achievement of the Philippines Inc. Golf Classic 2005 will be held on March 4 at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club, Laguna. This fund-raising event will feature more than 250 top executives of major corporations. Proceeds will be used to support Junior Achievement's continuing efforts to develop Filipino youth into business entrepreneurs of tomorrow. The event's gold sponsor is Petron Corporation Inc.

Pasay cockfest features 60 fights

MORE than 60 fights are lined up when the fifth edition of the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) 4-Cock Derby gets going today at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit with Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free as sponsors. Tabloid executive Rey Briones ruled the fourth PCCA derby last Feb. 4 when his entry, Spartan's Blood tallied four victories. Briones also leads the PCCA Cocker of the Year race with 12.5 points, followed by newspaper publisher Jake Macasaet (Greenwood, 11) and Jack Chung (Union JNL Gamefarm, 11). Meanwhile, another 4-cock event is scheduled on Feb. 25 with the ASF Group as host. At stake is a cash prize of P300,000 for a P10,000 entry fee. For inquiries, call 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

Advice & more

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

EVERY GIRL who plays golf belongs to a rare breed. Since this game is laid back, girls usually shun it.

There isn't much action here, the kind that elicits shrieks and youthful glee very characteristic of pre-teen girls.

Unabashed juvenile carelessness: why, golf doesn't have that. The lawbreakers are promptly banished to cockpit arenas, where unrestrained noise is more like the rule than the exception. In this game, cheers are almost taboo—except with the day's last putt finally dropped, if ever it merits some celebrating at all.

This game usually traps only the "serene," the quiet type. Extroverts are better off seen in volleyball.

Boxing and basketball need hooting and cheering from the crowd to draw out the warrior's juice from the protagonists.

It's the reverse in golf.

In this game, silence is the code word of excellence. How many can keep their mouths shut, their feelings reined in, for hours on end?

The cheers, they are better kept buried deep in the chest if you want skills from the combatants to glisten in the sun.

The "girl of golf" would grow into a lady who'd eventually set herself apart from the everyday woman because golf is a world peopled by jealous mortals.

In her kid days, I used to see Jayvie Agojo play the game. Early on, I saw her potential. So, when she started winning here and abroad before she could even turn into a sweet sixteen, I knew the bud would soon blossom into a flower.

In August, Jayvie is America-bound for a golf scholarship at Pepperdine University in L.A.

At 18 years of age, Jayvie has virtually won everything that's to be won—except the Southern Ladies Open. Her schooling had interfered.

As a rookie in this 42nd staging of the Southern Ladies Open at Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro City, Jayvie appeared set to win it.

"If my feel of the game holds in the next two days, I might yet win it," said Jayvie after opening up with a 6-under-par total in the NGAP-sanctioned 54-hole event. That's six up on her closest pursuer, defending champion Lora Roberto.

No other girl—err teenager—after Jennifer Rosales has been as dominating as Jayvie Agojo. And it seems only yesterday when this wispy charmer was just a kid "not taller than a Christmas tree."

But even as we would soon "lose" Jayvie, albeit temporarily, to America, I just saw a girl, not yet 14, with a lot of promise.

Seeing her tee off yesterday at Pueblo de Oro, Ichiro Ikeda, whose Japanese father is married to a Filipina, can really bang that dimpled ball hard enough for a carry of nearly 220 yards.

"She'll be the next star of Philippine golf," said Imee Garcia of Davao City's Apo Golf Club. "I'd like to think she's my protégée. I like her attitude cause she's really focused."

Who said we've run out of talents from the distaff side of the game?

Scour the country and you can unearth talents faster than bus drivers can change lanes at Edsa.

The advice applies to all sports officials—the well meaning, specifically.

***

FASTBREAK. The men and women behind the hosting of the 42nd Southern Ladies Open Golf Championship deserve mention here—Narisa C. Sarmiento, Noemi Y. Cordovez, Kathy S. Kho, Vic-Vic L. Casiano, Mon-Mon C. Bagaipo, Ruben T. Gallenero, Edgar B. Dichos, Emee S. Pacudan, Norminia Balansag and Mel S. Makinano. Of course, Clifford P. Celdran, the Operations Manager of host club Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro City, has been doing a great job ensuring the success of the tournament. Hearty cheers also go to Celine Menez and hubby, Rudy, Teri Solitaria, Annette Mendoza, Anna Roa and Judith Orimaco, the chief organizers of the oldest, most prestigious lady golf event outside of Luzon. And who can forget Susan Facundo, as usual the NGAP's workhorse for the event? Here's a glass to you, guys and dolls!

AN EARLY double bogey sours up Angelo Que's round.

Thongchai out front with 64; Que 9 off

KUALA LUMPUR—Defending champion Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand set the early pace at the Malaysian Open with an eight-under-par 64 in the first round on Thursday.

The 35-year-old former Thai Army paratrooper recorded an eagle and six birdies to end the round three strokes clear of Australia's Jarrod Moseley, Sweden's Niclas Fasth and Italy's Emanuele Canonica.

The Philippines' Angelo Que, winner of the Asian Tour's final tournament last year in Vietnam, struggled on the front nine and wound up with a 73.

Que made a double bogey-7 on No. 3 and yielded another stroke on No. 6 for a 39 going out. He birdied three of the first four holes on the inward nine, but dropped another shot on No. 12.

Que made a double bogey-7 on No. 3 and yielded another stroke on No. 6 for a 39 going out. He birdied three of the first four holes on the inward nine, but dropped another shot on No. 12.

The day truly belonged to Thongchai, the man Que nipped for the title in the Vietnam Masters last December.

"I am very happy as everything was perfect today," said Thonghchai, the Asian Tour's No. 1 player, after the first round of the tournament co-sanctioned by the European Tour.

"I had good feelings coming into this week. I practiced a lot on my short irons and putting and put in some good work at home."

A year ago Thongchai recorded his first European Tour victory with a sensational final round display that included a 16th hole ace and a last hole birdie.

Fasth continued his excellent form just four days after he clinched the New Zealand Open.

The Swede dropped just one shot in his round of 67 that included an eagle at his fourth hole. He started his round from the 10th tee.

"The eagle got me going and I just tried to build on that," he said.

"But I was struggling with some of my tee shots and I had to work a bit harder. It was very, very hot and whilst I have played in these conditions before, it all adds up."

Canonica did not drop a stroke in his round as he chases a first victory in 11 years on the European Tour.

Ireland's Paul McGinley, despite a knee injury, and fellow European Ryder Cup-winning colleague Miguel Angel Jimenez of Spain were well placed at four under par. *Reuters*

Agojo fires 66, leads Southern Ladies tilt

By Al. S. Mendoza

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Jayvie Agojo introduced herself to Southern Ladies Open play yesterday by firing a six-under-par 66 that shone in the burning sun at the Pueblo de Oro here.

Agojo, 18, had only one bogey in constructing a near-flawless round for a six-point margin over defending champion Lora Roberto and seven over former champion Carmelette Villaroman in the Molave scoring system.

"I can't complain. I played very well today," said Agojo. "From tee to green, everything went almost perfect."

Roberto, the winner last year in Bacolod, matched par 72 and Villaroman, the champion in 1999, made 73 in the 42nd edition of the NGAP-organized tournament that drew 75 players from all over the archipelago.

"My putting deserted me," said Roberto, who designs Jennifer Rosales' apparel in the US LPGA. "I need a lot of catching up tomorrow."

Also at 73 was a South Korean named Kim Cho-hui as 16 ladies teed off in the championship division of the three-day event that stakes a brand new Mizuno Euros Ladies golf set and a 29-inch flat TCL TV as hole-in-one prizes.

Lina de Guzman, who upset Agojo last week in the Samsung finals, had a 78 in this most revered of all ladies golf event backed by DHL Worldwide Express, WWW Express, Petron Corp., Gopez Corp., Admiral Luisito Fernandez (ret.), DPC Yellow Pages, Hans Brumann Jeweller, Master Sports Corp., Globe Telecommunications, HSBC-Mabuhay Miles Visa, Rep. Lala Santos (1st District, Cotabato), Danny Pascual of Western Engineering and Xavier Estates, the official hotel.

With her 60 points in the scoring system that gives 4 points to a birdie and 3 to a par, Agojo might yet run away with the crown in her rookie year.

Agojo, the reigning Philippine Ladies champion, greened the 230-yard 12th but missed her eagle from 9 feet.

Her game was almost impeccable that when she missed her only green for the day—the par-3 13th—she pitched in for birdie from 20 yards before shooting down two more birdies on 16 and 18.

"Not to make an alibi but I lost all my feel for golf during the Samsung finals last week at Malarayat," said Agojo, who can duplicate Heidi Chua's victory in 2000 as a rookie if she emerges winner tomorrow. Chua has turned pro.

There were 16 entered in the championship division (0-10 handicap), 14 in Class A (11-18), 16 in Class B (19-24), 16 in Class C (25-28) and 13 in Class D (29 and above) in the series began by the NGAP in 1963.

The scores:

Championship: 66=60 pts—Agojo; 72=54—Roberto; 73=53—Kim, Villaroman; 75=51—Miñoza; 76=50—Tanpinco; 78=48—De Guzman; 79=47—Guioguio, Locsin; 80=46—Cho; 82=36—Abierra; 87=39—Unchuan; 94=34—N. Guioguio; 114=17—Song.

IN CHARGE: Tournament first-timer Jayvie Agojo ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Canlubang eyes PAL Interclub double victory

By Musong R. Castillo

MANOTOC

TOMMY Manotoc's spot in the regular men's team of the Canlubang Sugar Barons is still up in the air as he contemplates semi-retirement a week before the start of the annual Philippine Airlines Interclub in Negros Occidental.

"I can still play at a high level, I know," Manotoc told the INQUIRER yesterday. "But my presence (in the team) is not doing (Philippine) golf any good.

"I'd like to call myself an overstaying player and I would like to give my spot to someone else. Someone younger who can be developed into a future (national team) talent."

The 55-year-old Manotoc, the reigning Asia-Pacific Senior champion, has committed to play in the seniors tournament though, making Canlubang a rock-solid pick to romp off with both the men's and senior titles ~~in the~~ championships slated at the Marapara and Binitin layouts in Bacolod and Murcia town, respectively.

Manotoc will actually see Senior action for the second time, having helped Wack Wack to a distant second behind Luisita last year in the tournament played in Pueblo de Oro in Cagayan de Oro and Del Monte in Bukidnon.

He also won the individual senior plum.

Manotoc said he met with Canlubang skipper Luigi Yulo Wednesday to discuss the possibility of skipping the men's event, which Del Monte won last year in a stirring upset over Manila Southwoods and the Sugar Barons.

Canlubang still has the core of the RP Team pool in Juvic Pagunsan, Jun Bernis and Jay Bayron and Ronnie Torrecampo as well as World Amateur veteran Dave Hernandez, making it the favorite in the men's tournament as well.

Luisita, which fields a team only in the senior division, lost team captain Rudy Samson to cancer a couple of months back and the long-running labor problem in Hacienda Luisita has made the club's participation uncertain.

The Luisitans normally flaunt the meanest lineup in the senior division, with the nucleus of the team made up of Richie Garcia, Alex Montelibano, Iggy Clavecilla and Francis Gaston.

"If that group is intact, it will be very hard to beat," Manotoc said. "Whether Luisita fields a team or that group decides to play together for another (team) remains to be seen."

Former pro Rolly Viray is another key addition to the Canlubang seniors. Bing Bunyi, Tony Olives and Lino Magpantay plus three others to be named within the week will make up the eight players for the Sugar Barons.

Malarayat readies 'rough' RP Open

LIPA CITY—With the winds expected to be absent at around the time the Philippine Open is held in May, Mount Malarayat officials will turn to the roughs as the primary defense of the front and back nines known as Mt. Makulot and Mt. Lobo, respectively.

Because the Asian Tour calendar can only accommodate the RP Open only in May, the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines has decided to schedule the US$200,000 event from 19 to 22 of the month.

Midyear-weather is relatively calm at Mount Malarayat, a 27-hole complex, which plays its toughest in the early and latter parts of the year because of the winds that blow from all directions.

General manager Mike Carr said the venue's test will be its roughs and fairways which will be shaped for smaller landing areas.

"Most of our holes are not really that long, especially without the wind," Carr said. "We will make the fairways narrower, some of them just 20-25 yards wide, and we will make the greens play lightning-fast.

"You wouldn't want to be in the roughs in the Open, I promise you."

Carr said they would grow Bermuda grass-roughs to at least 2.5 inches long in most holes and about four inches in shorter holes.

The greens will be trimmed to a speed of 10-11 and the pins placed in difficult positions to reward aggressive yet accurate play.

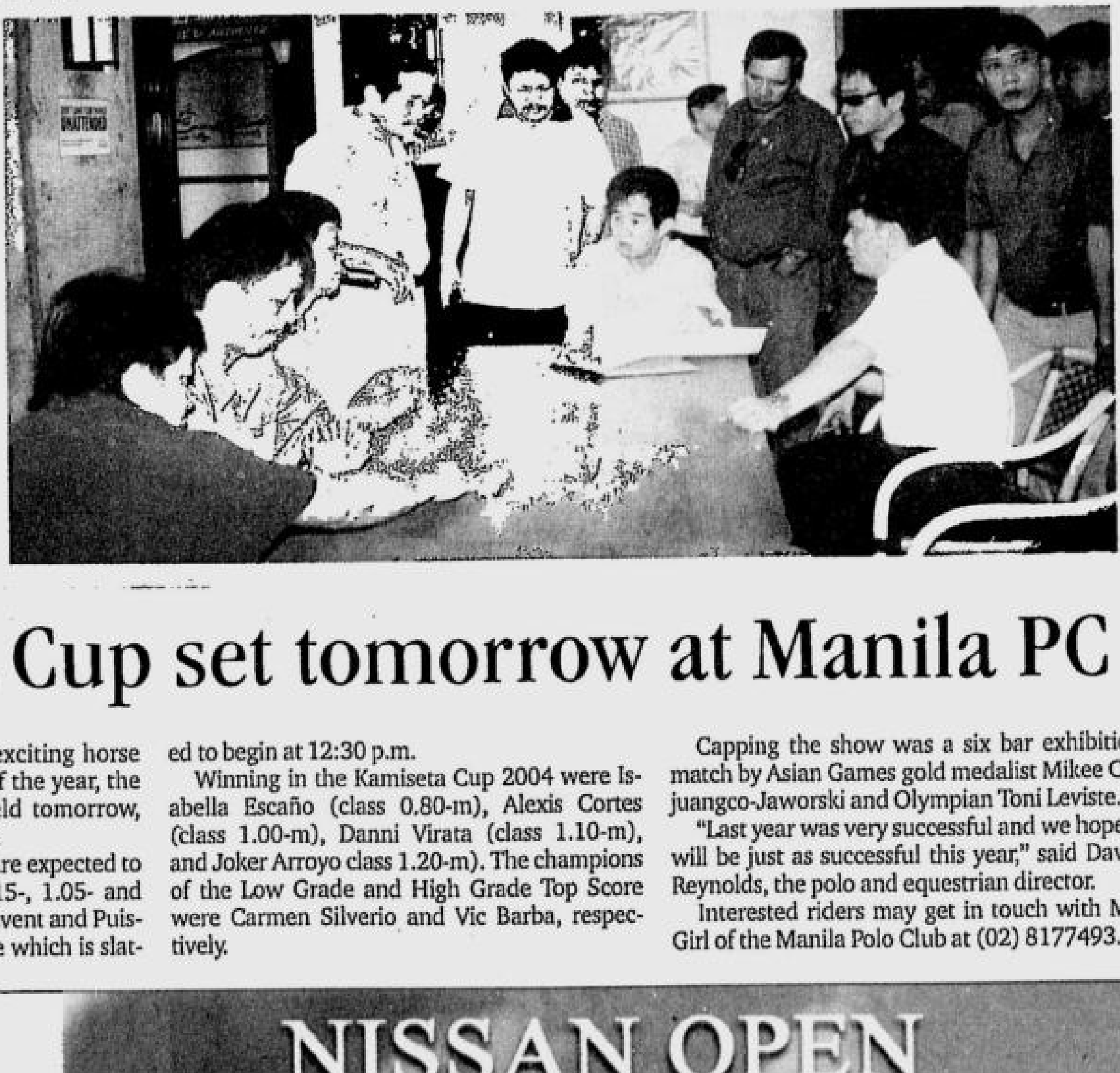
"We don't want a golf course that cannot be conquered," added Carr. "What we want is a Philippine Open that will be one of the best, if not the best."

Carr and golf operations manager Jack Imperial are also considering opening the tournament free for the fans. A two-hour drive south of Manila, Mount Malarayat may also give the public free shuttle rides.

The United States' Edward Michaels is the defending RP Open champion. He won over local amateur ace Juvic Pagunsan at The Riviera's Langer course in February last year.

The Pueblo de Oro, another young course in Cagayan de Oro, will be the site of the 2006 Open, with the NGAP looking at holding the 2007 edition at the Robert Trent Jones-created Ayala Greenfields Estate in Laguna. *Musong R. Castillo*

MANIFESTO OF SUPPORT
Efren "Bata" Reyes, Francisco "Django" Bustamante and other top players submit to billiards godfather Aristeo G. Puyat a manifesto expressing their full confidence in Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto Fajardo. Fajardo's group supervises the selection of members of the RP team for the forthcoming Southeast Asian Games here in December.



Kamiseta Cup set tomorrow at Manila PC

ONE OF the biggest and most exciting horse show jumping championships of the year, the Kamiseta Cup 2005, will be held tomorrow, Feb. 19, at the Manila Polo Club.

Seasoned and amateur riders are expected to put on a show in the 1.25-, 1.15-, 1.05- and 0.90-meter jumps. A team relay event and Puissance will round off the spectacle which is slated to begin at 12:30 p.m.

Winning in the Kamiseta Cup 2004 were Isabella Escaño (class 0.80-m), Alexis Cortes (class 1.00-m), Danni Virata (class 1.10-m), and Joker Arroyo class 1.20-m). The champions of the Low Grade and High Grade Top Score were Carmen Silverio and Vic Barba, respectively.

Capping the show was a six bar exhibition match by Asian Games gold medalist Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski and Olympian Toni Leviste.

"Last year was very successful and we hope it will be just as successful this year," said David Reynolds, the polo and equestrian director.

Interested riders may get in touch with Ms. Girl of the Manila Polo Club at (02) 8177493.

NISSAN OPEN RIVIERA C.C.

NISSAN OPEN
Feb. 18 Friday 4am LIVE / 11:30 am replay
Feb. 19 Saturday 4am LIVE / 10:00 pm replay
Feb. 20 Sunday 4am LIVE / 11:00 pm replay
Feb. 21 Monday 4am LIVE / 10:00 pm replay
sportsplus

Clijsters continues recovery

ANTWERP, Belgium—Former world number one Kim Clijsters continued her winning return from injury with a 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-1 victory over Russian fifth-seed Nadia Petrova on Wednesday.

The 21-year-old Belgian woman's next opponent at the $585,000 WTA tournament here is America's Venus Williams who put out France's Virginie Razzano, 6-3, 6-0.

Clijsters had been out of action with a serious wrist injury sustained in October but she said that the wrist held up well to the three-set examination.

"Everything's fine with the wrist. I could do everything I wanted to with my backhand—long backhand cross rallies, slicing. I really enjoyed every backhand." "I had the intention of wearing Petrova down and I did. It was a relief to win a three-set match. These are the kind of matches I have been looking forward to for a long time."

But she knows that Venus Williams will present a sterner opponent.

"She's tough, but I'd rather play against top players now. Only then I can find the appropriate match rhythm," said Clijsters.

"A quarterfinal against Venus is a nice prospect. I saw her play and she is very strong right now, completely focused. It will be difficult on Friday, but fun as well." After wrapping up the first set, Clijsters lost the second on a tie-break when the Russian sent down an ace.

Petrova's efforts were then hampered by a thigh injury which needed treatment at the start of the third set and Clijsters took full advantage to steam to a 5-1 lead.

The Belgian wrapped up the tie on her third match point on the Petrova serve. *AFP*

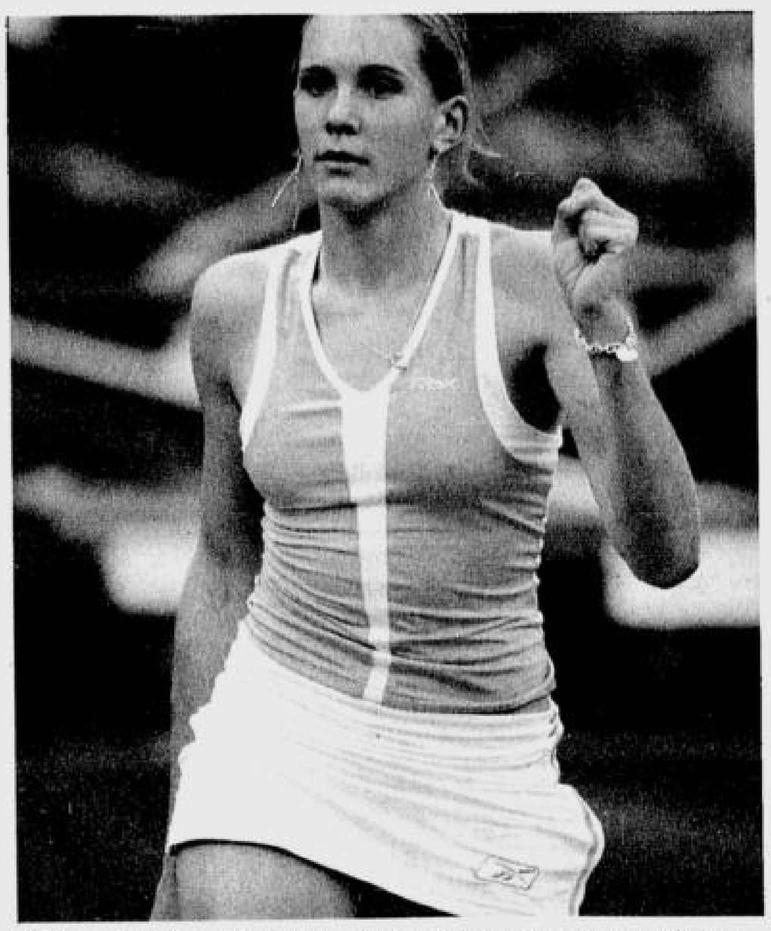
Canadian ace quits tennis due to drugs

TORONTO—Canadian tennis player Simon Larose announced his retirement on Wednesday after receiving a two-year suspension from the ATP for a positive cocaine test.

"I've been injured for most of the past year and maybe it's a message that it's my time to retire," Larose told the CBC website. "I just didn't want it to happen this way." According to the Montreal Gazette, Larose tested positive after attending a recent party with some friends where he smoked a cigarette laced with the drug.

Larose's biggest win on the ATP Tour came in 2003 when he upset Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten in the opening round of the Canadian Masters.

The 26-year-old reached a career-high ranking of 189 last August but because of injuries finished the 2004 season ranked 210th in the world. *Reuters*



NICOLE Vaidisova of the Czech Republic celebrates her 6-2, 6-2 win over Kristina Brandi of Puerto Rico during the WTA tournament. AFP

WORLD INDOOR TOURNEY

Federer rips rival

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands—Roger Federer began his quest to win one of the few titles to have escaped his grasp with a 6-3 6-4 first-round victory over Czech qualifier Bohdan Ulihrach at the World Indoor Tournament on Wednesday.

The Swiss world number one, playing his first match since losing in last month's Australian Open semifinals, overcame early jitters to chalk up his fourth successive triumph against Ulihrach.

Paradorn Srichaphan, however, brought Guillermo Coria's trial on the indoor circuit to a shuddering halt in the second round. The popular Thai beat the second-seeded Argentine, 2-6 7-6 6-3.

Ulihrach was facing a tall order when he stepped on court, the last time Federer had lost back-to-back matches was in May 2003, and that was before he became the world's best player.

"I'm at one of the few tournaments that I didn't win last year so the pressure is off," Federer joked.

"I have confidence in my own ability now and confidence is the best way to win matches." With only seven defeats over the past 16 months, Federer safely negotiated five break points in the opening set to frustrate Ulihrach.

Uncharacteristically, it also took the top seed six set points in the ninth game before he bagged the set.

He let a 40-0 advantage slip and Ulihrach missed an opportunity to break when a backhand agonizingly bounced just wide of the sidelines.

A Federer double fault handed Ulihrach another chance to break but that too fell by the wayside. Federer wrapped up the set when his opponent misfired a ball into the crowd.

After a 73-minute workout Federer booked his place in the second round against compatrio
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Mirza takes India by storm after WTA singles triumph

NEW DELHI—Hundreds of cheering fans jostled past a bewildered guard into a stadium in India last Saturday for the final of a women's tennis tournament.

This rare response in the cricket-mad nation was caused by the unprecedented participation of an Indian teenager in the final of a WTA event in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad.

Sania Mirza did not disappoint, creating history by becoming the first Indian woman to capture a WTA singles title. In the process she has also cracked the top 100 in the rankings, rising to 99 this week.

The landmark victory came 46 years after Ramanathan Krishnan became the first Indian man to win a title, at London's Queen's Club.

The Hyderabad-based Mirza, 18, has become the toast of a country starved of sporting heroes with even Prime Minister Manmohan Singh personally congratulating her.

The domestic media provided saturation coverage as the unseeded player, braving thigh and ankle injuries, progressed through each round and then upset Ukraine's Alyona Bondarenko, the ninth seed.

Her performance whipped up such frenzy that the regional government is providing her with personal security to avoid her being mobbed by overenthusiastic fans.

The articulate Mirza, who idolizes German tennis great Steffi Graf, has also drawn wide attention outside the sporting world by wearing trendy glasses and multiple earrings, making her both a teen icon and an advertiser's dream.

MIRZA: New sports heroine

She was ranked a modest 134 before the Hyderabad event and now has her sights set on breaking into the top 50.

"The encouragement we have received...has been tremendous," her delighted mother Naseema told Reuters.

"We were hoping she would reach the top 100 by this year-end. She has done that in two months. If she works hard, she can even touch top 50 this year." Mirza captured the nation's imagination last month when she reached the Australian Open third round as a wildcard before losing to eventual winner Serena Williams.

Davis Cup doubles players Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes have joined the chorus of praise for her.

"It's a great effort for an 18-year-old girl to do this in India," said Bhupathi, whose sports management firm manages Mirza.

"We can look forward to exciting times from her. Sania's strong point is she handles pressure very well," he told Reuters. "If you can do that in professional tennis, half the battle is won.

"This victory will spark huge interest in women's tennis in India." Previously Indian male players have shone on the tour and in Davis Cup.

Krishnan and Vijay Amritraj were highly rated while Paes and Bhupathi are multiple doubles grand slam winners.

By contrast, Nirupama Vaidyanathan reaching the second round at the 1998 Australian Open had been the best effort by an Indian woman.

Daughter of a Hyderabad-based builder, Mirza showed early promise after being initiated into tennis as a 6 year old.

Her natural forehand and all-out aggression were unusual in Indian women tennis players who have in the past displayed a tendency for soft serves and tame baseline rallies.

Mirza's big boost came in 2002 when Paes decided to take her on as his mixed doubles partner at the Asian Games. The duo went on to claim the bronze medal.

The rise has been steady since then. *Reuters*

**NETS' Vince Carter reacts after teammate Travis Bo
during the fourth quarter against the Kings Wednesd**

CHAMPS: Tanith Belbin and Benjamin Agosto of the US perform during the original dance event of the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships 2005 in Gangneung, Korea, Feb. 17. Belbin and Agosto won. AFP

Morales: A stubborn southpaw customer

MANUEL Morales has never lost to a left-hander and he does not intend to fail for the first time against southpaw Filipino champion Manny Pacquiao in their March 19 showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas.

The 28-year-old Mexican, a former three-time World Boxing Council champion in three separate divisions, emphasized he's not worried by the highly touted left hand of the Filipino in an interview with a Mexican news service yesterday.

"In my past fights I already faced left-handed boxers and I beat them all by knockout, with the exception of Enrique Angeles who I beat in 12 rounds... My better artillery is my right hand and that's what I will use against left-handed people," he said.

"Pacquiao is dangerous because of his speed, but my superior strength will be the determining factor," added Morales, who held world titles in the bantamweight, featherweight and super featherweight divisions.

Morales, nicknamed "El Terrible," said Pacquiao is a one-dimensional fighter who cannot adapt to a fight situation. Salven L. Lagumbay

'Other' Pacquiao seeks title today

PHILIPPINE junior lightweight champion Bobby Pacquiao won't have his more illustrious brother by his side, but he vowed to wrest the International Boxing Federation Pan Pacific featherweight crown from Thai Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym today.

The 12-round fight is set at 4:30 p.m at the Pattaya Port. Pacquiao was accompanied by handlers Rod Nazario, Moy Lainez, Lito Mondejar and trainer Nonoy Neri. The Thai was stopped in one round by his older brother Manny in 2002 in Davao. Salven L. Lagumbay

SCOOP still tra
Olympians for

THE SCOOP Annual Awards Night, originally scheduled Feb. 24, has been moved to a later date to give the organizing Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines more time to trace the whereabouts of the surviving Filipino Olympians, who will be honored during the occasion.

SCOOP president Eddie Alinea yesterday said he was still coordinating with the different national sports associations as to whom among the Olympians from 1924 up to last year are still alive and where they can be reached.

The search for the surviving Olympians is be
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Maradona causes traffic jam

BOGOTA—Diego Maradona insisted that his visit to the Caribbean city of Cartagena was for nothing more than a holiday and asked to be left in peace on Wednesday.

Maradona, who spoke to reporters for the first time since he arrived a week ago, gave a 10-minute interview in front of the apartment block where he is staying.

He allowed himself to be photographed with some European tourists and his presence in the street caused a traffic jam in the chic neighborhood.

"I've just come to say hello and respect your work," said the 44-year-old former Argentina captain, who has ballooned in weight and is scarcely recognizable from his playing days.

"Cartagena has treated me phenomenally, I'm unwinding."

He added: "I'm very well and I'm grateful to Colombia for the affection I've been shown. I hope you respect me as well."

Maradona arrived in the city last Wednesday amid rumors he was to have liposuction but doctors denied he would have surgery on Tuesday.

"He's here in Cartagena on holiday, for a rest. He's been here a couple of times to check his arterial pressure," the director of the Medigel Clinic Francisco Holguin said.

"The possibility of operation has not been considered."

Maradona spent more than a week in the intensive care unit of a Buenos Aires hospital last April with heart and breathing problems. He was then confined to a psychiatric clinic by his family. *Reuters*

MARADONA: Crowd drawer AP

FIM P. Princesa m

MORE exciting action is in the works when Puerto Princesa hosts anew the 2005 FIM Puerto Princesa International Motocross Championship on March 20 at the race track situated near the Puerto Princesa City Hall.

The event, actually the Philippine leg of the FIM Asia Motocross Series that kicked off last month in Guam,
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to skip his favored South America this his all-court game ot payoff.
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son enjoyed his sta- member of the top- 2 6-7 6-3 win over r Yeu-Tzuoo Wang. o cracked the ATP r the first time this g his second title of e, recovered from a o win in just under

gh to go from one ther without a gap so it takes time to adjust," said Johansson, who won his first title a year ago this week in Memphis.

After climbing 141 places in the standings in just 13 months, he added: "You always want to be on top and if I play the way I know I can, it can only get better but I still have to improve everything in my game." He was in imperious form in the first set and overpowered Wang with his blistering groundstrokes.

Wang refused to be intimidated by his 1.98m tall opponent and hit back in the second when Johansson prepared to serve out for a straight sets victory.

He broke the Swede while trailing 4-5 in the set by forcing Johansson to swipe a forehand into the net before running away with the tiebreak, 7-2.

The fifth-seeded Swede regained his concentration in the third to seal victory with an overhead smash.

The win set up a second-round showdown with his namesake, 2002 Australian Open champion Thomas Johansson.

Qualifier Wawrinka made a mockery of the ranking difference with Grosjean, who at number 27 is 101 places above him, with the biggest win of his professional career.

Last year's finalist Juan-Carlos Ferrero of Spain also slipped out beaten, 6-4, 6-7, 6-3, by Czech Radek Stepanek.

Meanwhile, Srichaphan continued to reap the rewards of his decision to work with a new coach—former tour professional American TJ Middleton—after he and his father mutually agreed to end their partnership.

The Asian number one, however, insisted that his father Chanachai, who had coached him since childhood, is still taking an active role in his career. Reuters

FEDERER acknowledges the crowd after beating Czech Bohdan Ulihrach, 6-3, 6-4, in the World Indoor Tournament. AFP

Ventura advances in Brazil

BRAZIL—Spain's Santiago Ventura beat countryman Alex Corretja, 6-4, 6-4, and advanced to the quarterfinals of the US$380,000 (euro297,760) ATP Brazil Open, in one of the few matches completed Wednesday before rain forced play to be suspended.

Five of the eight second-round matches at the northeastern tourist complex of Costa do Sauipe were postponed until Thursday.

Ventura, ranked 84th in the world, overcame Corretja after a rain delay that lasted nearly six hours. Ventura was down 1-3 in the second set when the match was interrupted, but he was able to win five of the last six games when play resumed.

In another delayed match, Albert Martin of Spain defeated Paul-Henri Mathieu of France, 6-2, 7-5. Martin, who was ahead 6-2, 4-4 when play was suspended, won three of the last five games to clinch a spot in the quarterfinals of the clay-court event.

Martin, 61st in the world, will play Mariano Zabaleta of Argentina, who had advanced after beating Guillermo Garcia-Lopez of Spain, 6-2, 6-2.

Top-seeded Ricardo Mello, Brazil's No. 1 ranked player, will play Martin Vassallo-Arguello of Argentina when play resumes Thursday morning.

Mello became the top-seeded player after 2004 French Open champion Gaston Gaudio withdrew because of a thigh injury. Defending champion Gustavo Kuerten also is out of this year's tournament because of an injury. *AP*

Spurs pound Hornets, regain NBA best mark

st (6) hit a three-point shot on an assist from Carter lay night. The Nets won. AP

TORONTO—Tim Duncan scored 19 points and Manu Ginobili added 13 with 10 assists as the San Antonio Spurs pounded the New Orleans Hornets, 101-78, on Wednesday to reclaim a share of the best record in the standings.

The victory completed a successful 5-1 road trip for the Spurs, who head home for the all-star break level with the Phoenix Suns on identical marks of 41-12.

Malik Rose, Tony Rose and Rasho Nesterovic each contributed 12 points to the San Antonio cause while J.R. Smith answered with 25 for the Hornets.

In Philadelphia, Chauncey Billups and Richard Hamilton each bagged 20 points, sending the NBA champion Detroit Pistons into the all-star break with a solid 93-75 win over the 76ers.

The NBA's leading scorer Allen Iverson, coming off career-high 60-point performance on Saturday and a 38-point effort on Monday, made more modest contribution against the Pistons finishing with 23 points and seven assists.

·The loss denied the 76ers a season-high fourth consecutive win.

In Cleveland, all-stars LeBron James and Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 28 and 18 points, respectively, as the Cavaliers crushed Atlanta Hawks, 111-89.

Drew Gooden contributed 19 points and 11 rebounds as the Cavaliers reached the 30-win mark before the all-star break for the first time since the 1992-93 season.

In Miami, Damon Jones notched a career high 31 points and Dwyane Wade had 28 points and dished out 12 assists as the surging Heat romped to a 113-95 win over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Shaquille O'Neal chipped in with 14 points and eight rebounds as the ·Eastern Conference leading Heat collected their seventh straight win to improve to 40-14.

The slumping Clippers, meanwhile, absorbed their seventh straight loss despite double figure performances from six players.

In East Rutherford, Jason Kidd recorded his 64th career triple-double and Vince Carter added 21 points as the Nets two all-star guards lifted the New Jersey to a 96-85 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Kidd had 19 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his fifth triple-double of the season and third in the last six games while rookie Nenad Kristic had a career-high 18 points, sending the slumping Kings to their sixth loss in seven.

In Indianapolis, Reggie Miller nailed a season-high 36 points and Jeff Foster had 14 points and 17 rebounds to spark the Pacers to a 95-87 win over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Jermaine O'Neal and Stephen Jackson had quiet nights scoring 10 and nine points, respectively, for the Pacers, winners of three of their last four.

In New York, the Knicks got double digit efforts from six players, led by a 23 point performance from Jamal Crawford to register a 108-90 triumph over the Milwaukee Bucks The Knicks recorded just their fifth win in 24 games as Stephon Marbury sat out the final quarter.

COMPLETE RESULTS: Boston 90, Memphis 88; Chicago 121, Toronto 115; Detroit 93, Philadelphia 75; Charlotte 94, Denver 88; Cleveland 111, Atlanta 89; Indiana 95, Portland 87; New Jersey 96, Sacramento 85; New York 108, Milwaukee 90; Miami 113, LA Clippers 95; San Antonio 101, New Orleans 78; Golden State 117, Seattle 110. *Reuters*

Bateer shines in CBA return

BEIJING—Much traveled center Mengke Bateer has made a triumphant return to the Chinese basketball league, scoring 25 points and grabbing 14 rebounds to help the Beijing Ducks beat the Shandong Flaming Bulls, 108-87, in his first game back.

Bateer, 29, played for 23 minutes in the Wednesday night encounter in Beijing. Fellow imported American center Olumide Oyedeji also had a strong game for the Ducks, scoring 17 points and snaring 17 rebounds.

Bateer, a seven-foot (2.12-meter) ethnic Mongolian, played for six NBA teams including the 2002-2003 league champion San Antonio Spurs during his three-year career in the world's top basketball league.

He had been playing for the National Basketball Development League's Huntsville Flight this season, but quit. He was waived by the New York Knicks in September.

Bateer is expected to help the Beijing team make a run at this year's China Basketball Association (CBA) championship.

Bateer was once a part of the "Walking Great Wall" of seven-foot Chinese centers that also include the NBA Houston Rockets' Yao Ming and Wang Zhizhi, currently playing for the Miami Heat. *AFP*

acking Filipino awards night

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ir is billed as the hering of the Fil- ats, SCOOP and take advantage to, once and for update of their s of the moment, le," Alinea ex-

lder brother of acapagal-Arroyo, paying tribute to the Olympians is long overdue.

Macapagal, the president of the Philippine National Shooting Association who saw action in the 20th Summer Games in 1972 in Munich and in 1976 in Montreal, is calling the POA board to a meeting Wednesday next week to discuss, among others, when and where the affair will be held.

"Lifetime Achievement Award" will be given to each medalists during the affair.

Surviving Olympians can get in touch with Chris Magboo at Macapagal's Toyota Pasong Tamo office 813-2051 and Etheljune Malanum at 522-0456 and 521-2692.

oto set March 20

will again show- ers from Japan, pines, Malaysia, , New Zealand, , Guam, Saipan

-Oakley's Glenn mmate Kenneth finished second ll in the "Motocross Masters of Asia" opener, will lead the Philippine riders in the premiere 125cc category.

Aguilar won the Philippine leg crown in the centerpiece division last year. San Andres also shared the limelight by bagging the top plum in the FIM Asian 85cc class.

For inquiries, call 0917-8992363.

Woods heads roster; Goosen disqualified

LOS ANGELES—Eight-time major winner Tiger Woods is hoping his early-season success this year is an indication he's back on form and ready to re-establish his superiority on the PGA Tour.

The 29-year-old American, who won the Buick Invitational in his last outing, heads the field at the $4.8 million Los Angeles PGA event which begins Thursday.

"I would love to win here," said Woods on Wednesday, sporting a new-look goatee. "I played my first Tour event here when I was 16. I have some great memories and some nervous memories.

"It is my hometown. All my friends and family are out here every year, so to see them is very special for me." This will be Woods' eighth appearance in Los Angeles as a professional and 10th including his amateur days. His best showings were in 1998 and 1999 when he finished second.

Woods could also reclaim the world No. 1 ranking from Vijay Singh by finishing fourth or better at the Riviera Country Club.

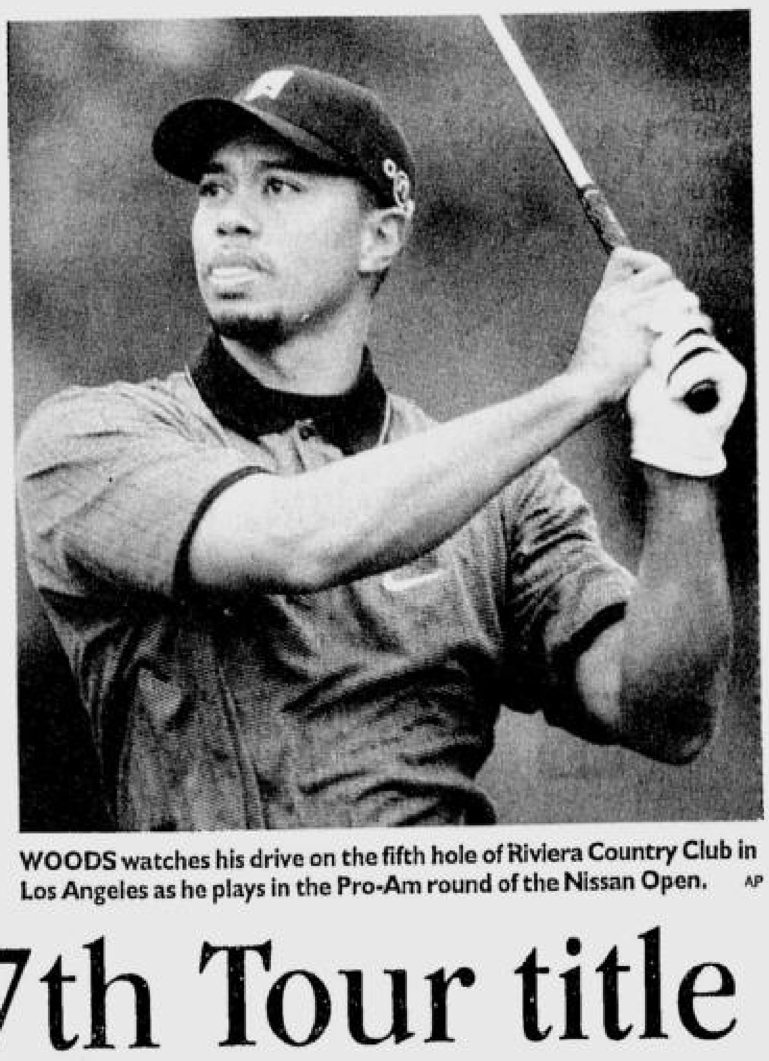
Woods took three weeks off after winning in San Diego to post his 41st PGA Tour victory.

He is ready to get back into the flow of playing regularly on the tour and let the rankings fall where they may.

"The No. 1 ranking is really not that important to me. It is winning. Winning is how I got to be No. 1 in the world.

"I have won three tournaments of late. Hopefully I can continue that trend." During his time off, Woods went skiing, attended college basketball games at his Alma Mater Stanford and grew a beard.

Vijay Singh, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els have decided to skip the Los Angeles event and the ranks got even thinner on Wednesday when world No. 5 Retief Goosen overslept and missed his Pro-Am tee time and was disqualified. *AFP*



WOODS watches his drive on the fifth hole of Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles as he plays in the Pro-Am round of the Nissan Open. AP

Armstrong eyes 7th Tour title

ARMSTRONG longs for more wins. AP

WASHINGTON—Lance Armstrong has ended speculation over whether he will race in the 2005 Tour de France by saying he will go for a seventh straight victory in this year's race.

Armstrong made history by becoming the first cyclist to win six Tours de France with a dominating performance, winning five individual stages in 2004.

"I am grateful for the opportunity that Discovery Communications has given the team and look forward to achieving my goal of a seventh Tour de France," Armstrong told the Discovery Channel Pro Cycling Team's website.

Armstrong will kick off his season early next month in the Paris-Nice seven-day stage race, the first event of the newly formed Pro Tour, the sport's top level racing series.

"I am excited to get back on the bike and start racing although my condition is far from perfect," said Armstrong.

Following Paris-Nice, Armstrong will take part in the 89th edition of the Tour of Flanders, one of Europe's most prestigious Spring Classics, on April 3.

Armstrong last raced in the Tour of Flanders in 2002, finishing 59th in support of his team's leader.

The Texan will then return to the US and defend his title at the Tour de Georgia from April 19-25.

"Johan (Bruyneel, the team's sports manager) and I will evaluate my fitness later this spring and possibly add some races to the calendar," said Armstrong. *AFP*

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Dream holiday at Pearl Farm Beach Resort

INDULGE... and enjoy luxurious accommodations at the beautiful and world-renowned Pearl Farm Beach Resort at very affordable rates! The "Dream Holiday" packages will run until Dec. 15. For only P3,500 avail of overnight accommodations at the Balay House located at the quiet and cool hill top, indulge and stay at the Samal House built on stilts above the calm waters for only P3,750, or at the Mandaya House over at the next cove for more private moments for only P4,000. All rooms are inclusive of welcome drinks, full board meals (breakfast/lunch/dinner) roundtrip airport and boat transfers, complimentary use of swimming pools, and other recreational facilities.

Bliss beckons... recharge and rejuvenate with a soothing massage at the resort's Ylang-Ylang Lounge. Luxuriate in the calming ambiance formed by the relaxing sounds of the trickling waterfalls nearby, exotic lush foliage and world-class spa furnishings. The resorts aqua sports also offers diving courses and expeditions to the various undiscovered dive sites surrounding the island. Go snorkeling and mingle with the different species of marine life found under the Parola or further out to sea.

For inquiries and reservations, please call the Manila sales office at (02) 750-1896/98 or email pearlfarm@fuegohotels.com. You can also visit the website at www.pearlfarmresort.com or www.fuegohotels.com

Go 'adobo loco' at Fiesta San Miguel Dusit

THIS February, beg for all - time Filipino favorite, the "Adobo." Fiesta San Miguel's Sous Chefs Joanne and Willy will certainly give it a twist. With secret recipe spices expect a flattering flavorful adobo in Fiesta San Miguel's month - long February "Adobo Station".

Satisfy your palate from wide selections of "Adobong Baka, " "Adobong Halo Halong Lamang Dagat na may Taba ng Talangka ," "Adobong Tupa," "Adobong Manok," "Adobong Halo Halong Gulaay," and "Adobong Kanin," all served with garlic chips, spring onions, and pickled vegetables.

Feast at Fiesta San Miguel Bar with this month' band line-up as follows: Mondays - Route 70, Tuesday - PS2/Ntwine, Wednesdays - Odette & Rey , Toy Symphony, Thursday - PS2, Arpie and the Multivitamins, Fridays - K24/7, Passage, Saturdays - Kernie's Street.

Enjoy Fiesta San Miguel's "Happy Hour" promo from 5:30 p.m. until 9 p.m. - Drink all you can of freshly brewed San Miguel Beer priced at P300++.

For inquiries, please contact 867-3333 extension 3341.

The Bellevue and Mont Blanc host 1st Polo Cup

THE BELLEVUE Hotel and Mont Blanc will hold its first Polo Cup on Feb. 27 at the Alabang Country Club Polo field. Polo [illegible] from the metropolis, Ayala Alabang Village [illegible] other VIPs from top companies are expected [illegible] this rare event as the Alabang Polo Club and Manila Polo Club battle against each other to win this season's championship trophy. VIPs [illegible] the booth that will be conveniently [illegible] they benefit from the several sponsors [illegible] also participate in the event. Veteran host [illegible] will be leading the awarding ceremony [illegible]. Guests can lounge around with quality wines and champagne and enjoy sumptuous cocktails especially prepared by Bellevue's executive chef Hans Peter Eckstein.

Appealing awards and exciting special prizes from Bellevue, Mont Blanc, BMW and other sponsors await the winners of this prestigious cup. For inquiries, please call 77[illegible]-818[illegible]

HOTEL AND TOURISM STUDENTS SCHOLARSHIP DONATION
The proceeds of the recent Hotel and Restaurants Association of the Philippines' (HRAP) Grand Ball was handed over to the Hotel Tourism Institute of the Philippines (HTIP) to continue its scholarship program for deserving students. Shown in photo are: New World Renaissance Hotel general manager and chair of the HRAP's Grand Ball Stephan Stoss (second from left), HRAP president Larry Cruz (third from left) and HTIP treasurer Leonor O'Leary (third from right). With them are Princess Cruises officials namely: Eve Cayaban, Trey Hickey and Lisa Nakpil, who donated the Grand Prize of a Caribbean Cruise during the ball to support the worthwhile scholarship program.

Somerset's Power of Three

ENJOY the triple treat of a special promotion from Somerset Millennium, Somerset Olympia and Somerset Salcedo, Makati - Somerset Power of 3.

From now until Feb. 28, experience our studios at US$60 and our one-bedroom units at US$80 with three selected privileges from the following: automatic room upgrade to the next category (subject to room availability), complimentary buffet breakfast for two (2) persons, 1 hour complimentary daily broadband Internet access in the Business Centre, 20 percent discount on local calls, 20 percent discount on laundry services, 20 percent discount on dry cleaning services, free one-way airport transfer, free one office drop off/pick up within the Makati CBD.

Guests will enjoy an additional privilege on their next visit to our other Somerset properties in Manila during the promo period. Rates are subject to 10.5 percent government tax and 10 percent service charge.

For inquiries and reservations, you may contact our Central Sales Office at Telephone (63-2)888-0505 or (63-2)888-0537.

Back to back February treats from Rio Bar Cafe

SAVOR our delectable Chinese New Year Treats. Try our Spicy Korean Beef Barbecue and Butterfly Lapulapu in Sweet and Sour Sauce at the affordable rate of P150 nett and P300 nett respectively. Each mouth-watering menu comes with Java Rice and pickled papaya.

Love seat Valentine dinner

Celebrate a romantic Valentines Day with us. Indulge in Rio Bar Café's tempting treats. Choose from our Chef's latest sensation - Tormidos (pork tenderloin wrapped in bacon) for only P200 nett or Prawns Thermidor for only P450 nett. These heavenly meals come with buttered vegetables, jacket potato and a glass of red or white wine.

For reservations and inquiries, call Rio Bar Café at 523-1000.

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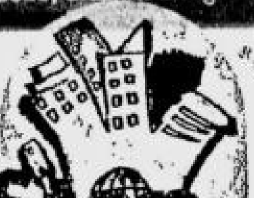

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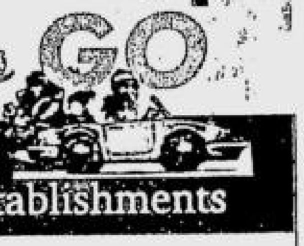

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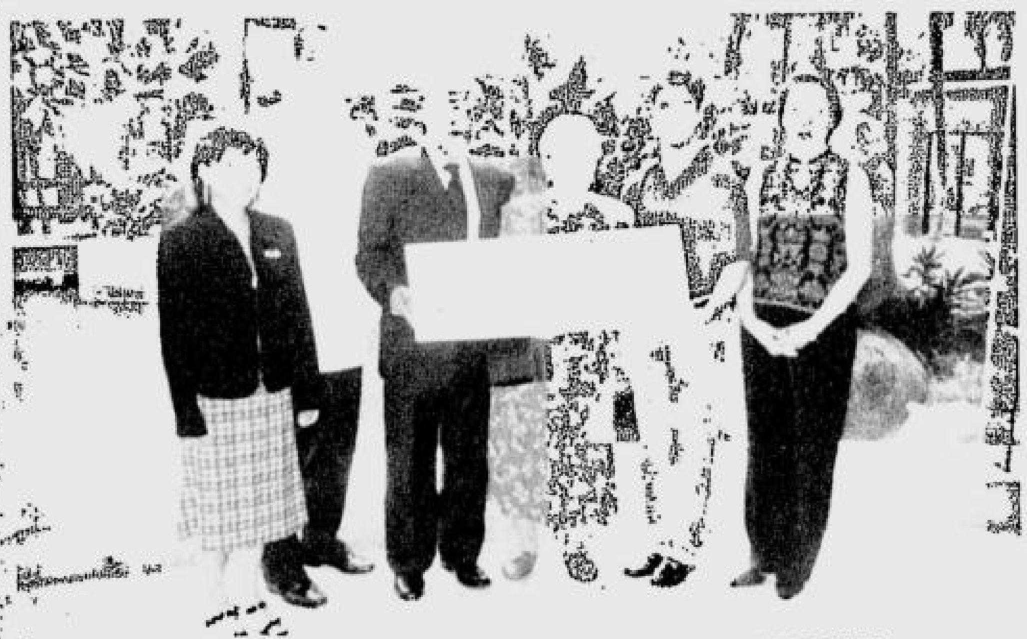

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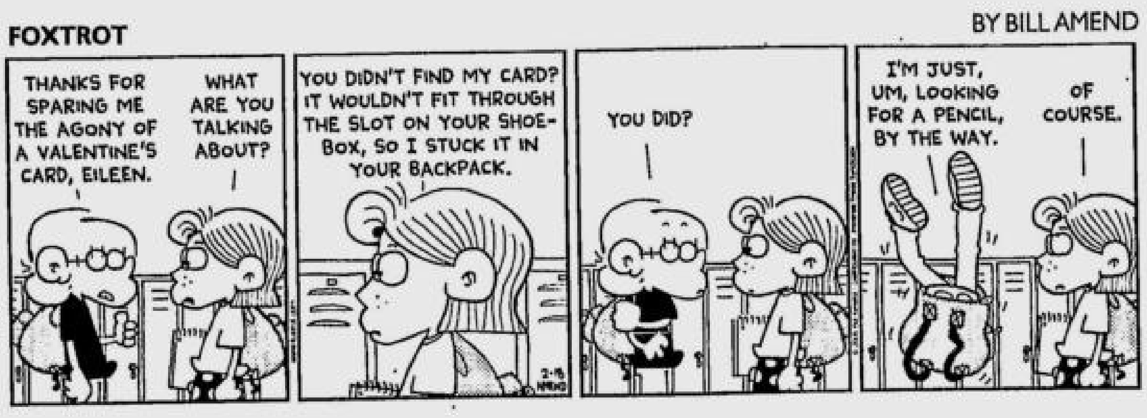
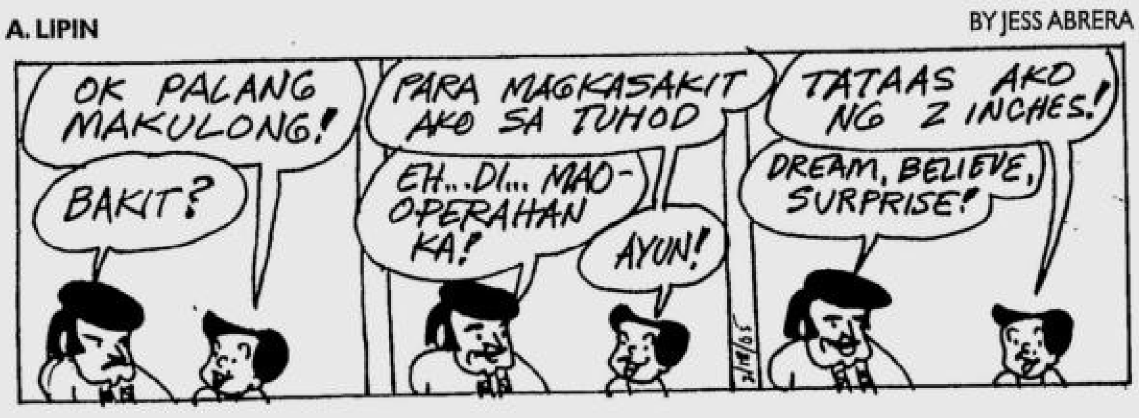
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


THANKS FOR SPARING ME THE AGONY OF A VALENTINE'S CARD, EILEEN.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DIDN'T FIND MY CARD? IT WOULDN'T FIT THROUGH THE SLOT ON YOUR SHOE-BOX, SO I STUCK IT IN YOUR BACKPACK.
YOU DID?
I'M JUST, UM, LOOKING FOR A PENCIL, BY THE WAY.
OF COURSE.

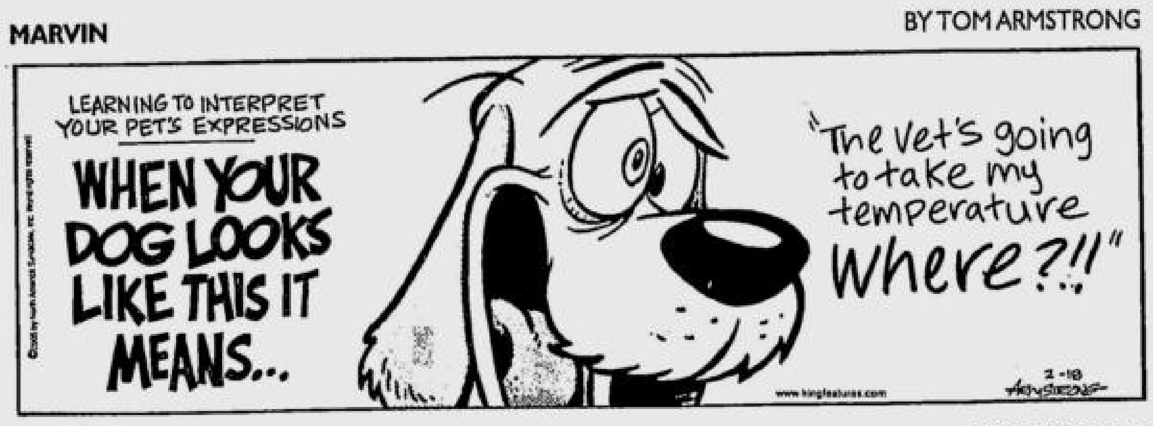
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


OK PALANG MAKULONG!
BAKIT?
PARA MAGKASAKIT AKO SA TUHOD
EH...DI... MAO-OPERAHAN KA!
AYUN!
TATAAS AKO NG 2 INCHES!
DREAM, BELIEVE, SURPRISE!

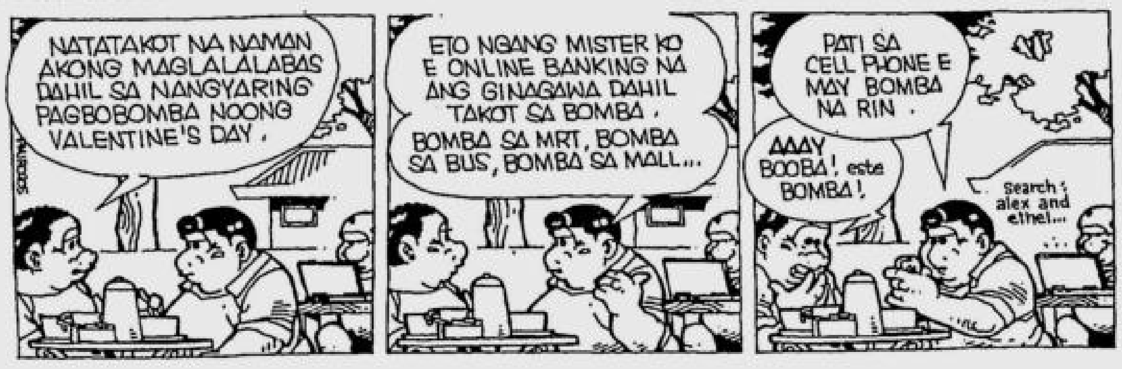
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


LEARNING TO INTERPRET YOUR PET'S EXPRESSIONS
WHEN YOUR DOG LOOKS LIKE THIS IT MEANS...
"The vet's going to take my temperature where?!!"
www.kingfeatures.com

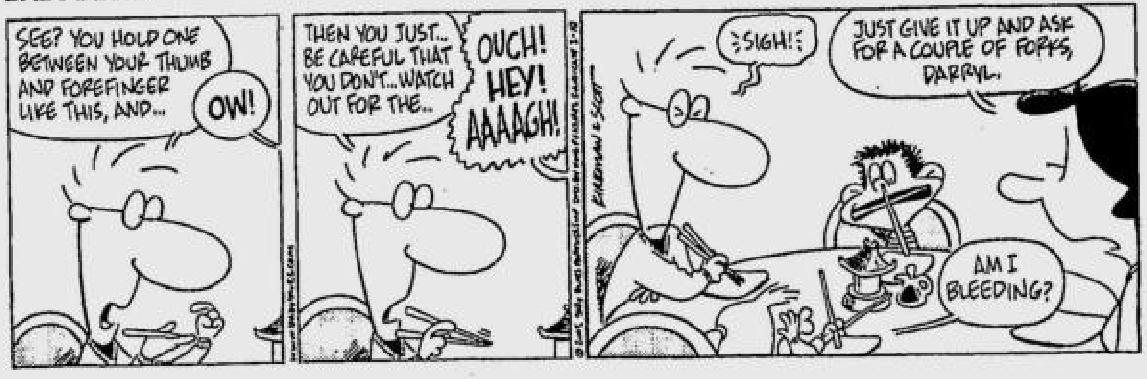
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NATATAKOT NA NAMAN AKONG MAGLALALABAS DAHIL SA NANGYARING PAGBOBOMBA NOONG VALENTINE'S DAY.
ETO NGANG MISTER KO E ONLINE BANKING NA ANG GINAGAWA DAHIL TAKOT SA BOMBA.
BOMBA SA MRT, BOMBA SA BUS, BOMBA SA MALL...
PATI SA CELL PHONE E MAY BOMBA NA RIN.
AAAY BOOBA! este BOMBA!
Search: alex and ethel...

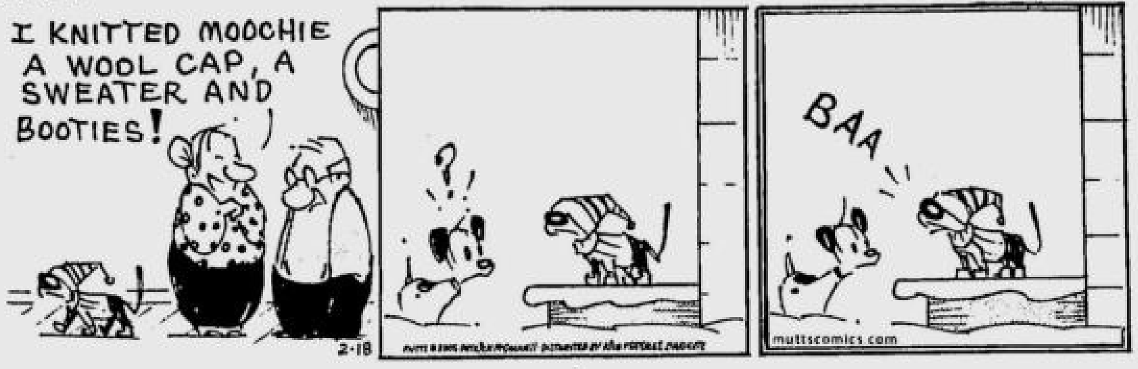
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SEE? YOU HOLD ONE BETWEEN YOUR THUMB AND FOREFINGER LIKE THIS, AND...
OW!
THEN YOU JUST... BE CAREFUL THAT YOU DON'T...WATCH OUT FOR THE...
OUCH! HEY! AAAAGH!
SIGH!
JUST GIVE IT UP AND ASK FOR A COUPLE OF FORKS, DARRYL.
AM I BLEEDING?

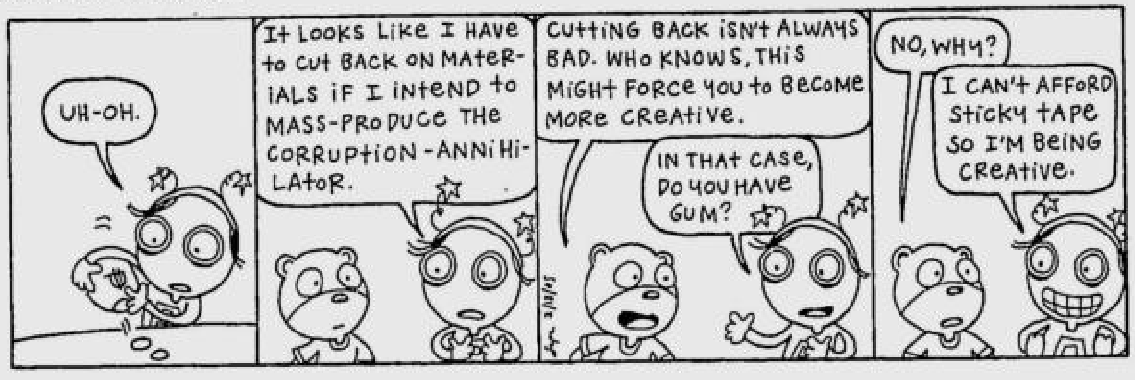
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I KNITTED MOOCHIE A WOOL CAP, A SWEATER AND BOOTIES!
?!
BAA
mutts comics.com

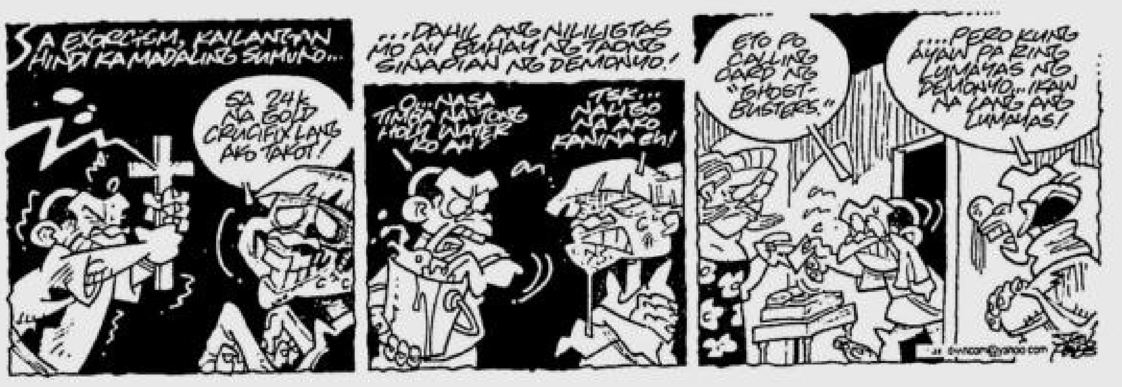
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


UH-OH.
It LOOKS LIKE I HAVE to CUT BACK ON MATERIALS IF I INTEND to MASS-PRODUCE THE CORRUPTION-ANNIHILATOR.
CUTTING BACK ISN'T ALWAYS BAD. WHO KNOWS, THIS MIGHT FORCE YOU to BECOME MORE CREATIVE.
IN THAT CASE, DO YOU HAVE GUM?
NO, WHY?
I CAN'T AFFORD STICKY TAPE SO I'M BEING CREATIVE.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


SA EXORCISM, KAILANGAN HINDI KA MADALING SUMUKO...
SA 24K NA GOLD CRUCIFIX LANG AKO TAKOT!
...DAHIL ANG NILILIGTAS MO AY BUHAY NG TAONG SINAPIAN NG DEMONYO!
O...NASA TIMBA NA 'TONG HOLY WATER KO AH?
TSK... NALIGO NA AKO KANINA EH!
ETO PO CALLING CARD NG "GHOST-BUSTERS."
...PERO KUNG AYAW PA RING LUMAYAS NG DEMONYO... IKAW NA LANG ANG LUMAYAS!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have your own original style. Because of this, sometimes you're misunderstood. But eventually others respect you. You enjoy beauty in a classic way. You have strong convictions about a wide variety of things. In the year ahead, you will wrap up things and let go of possessions, jobs and people to create room for something new.
Birthdate of: Cybill Shepherd, actress; John Travolta, actor; Yoko Ono, artist/musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel an increasing need for time by yourself. We all need "cooking time" so that we can sort out everything on the back burners of our minds.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Your interaction with friends and groups becomes more important to you in the next few weeks. Make a point of talking about your dreams and goals for the future with others.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): The Sun is now at high noon in your chart. This calls attention to you. Bosses, VIPs and all kinds of authority figures notice you.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You want to expand your opportunities in publishing, the media and higher education. Similarly, you might want to blow town by traveling somewhere!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Now is the time to deal with debt, taxes, unpaid bills and shared property. You also have to come to terms with the values of others. Keep an open mind in order to appreciate where others are coming from.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Sun now opposes your sign. This focuses your attention on your closest friendships and partnerships.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You're gung-ho to get organized! This is a good thing, because your surroundings hugely affect you. When you reduce the clutter in your environment, you reduce the clutter in your mind.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): What a playful, fun-loving, sexy, flirtatious month ahead! You want to have fun. You might also have more activities with children, sports and the entertainment world.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): It's all about home and family for you now. The next few weeks are the perfect time for real estate deals and fixing up things in your domestic world.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your daily tempo increases now because of short trips, appointments, errands, tasks and conversations with siblings and relatives. You are on the go!

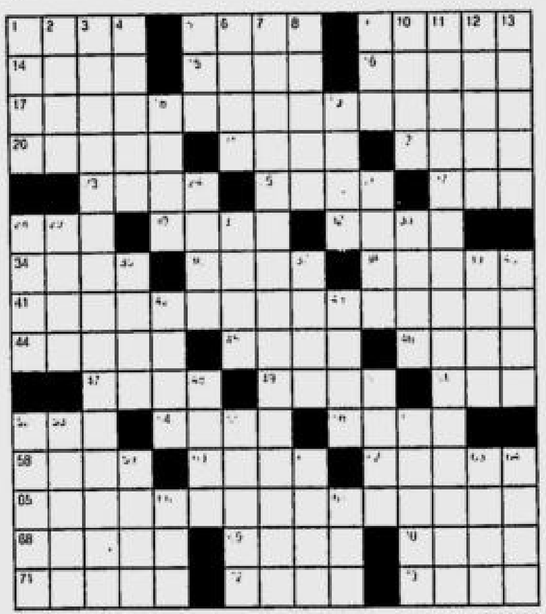
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Many of you enjoy making more money now. In the next few weeks, your cash flow interests you. It's as if the money goes out as fast as it comes in. (What's new?)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today the Sun enters your sign, signifying that it's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of year. Now is the time to put yourself first.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Lip
5 Grad
9 Ghana's capital
14 Skater Katarina
15 Anderson of "WKRP..."
16 More wan
17 This puzzle's theme
20 Sticky-toed lizard
21 Actress Moore
22 Tortoise rival
23 Retain
25 Jazz phrase
27 Silent assent
28 __ Plaines, IL
30 Wrongful act
32 Big brass instrument
34 Pot sweetener
36 London neighborhood
38 Pastoral people of Kenya
41 Fifty-percent smarter?
44 "The Jetsons" dog
45 __ homo (Behold the man!)
46 Gemini half
47 Stillness
49 Regatta blades
51 Yokohama yes
52 180 degrees from NNW
54 Bean curd
56 Modern Siamese
58 Singer Amos
60 Fleming's agent
62 First stage
65 Far from one's element
68 "The Misfits" star
69 Hawaiian goose
70 Lowest parts of small intestines
71 Zigzag turns
72 Attracted
73 Ooze

DOWN
1 Large swallow
2 Helper
3 Is nourishing
4 Use a poker
5 Pacino and Kaline
6 Burden
7 Surreptitiously
8 Florida metropolis
9 Simian
10 Liquid asset
11 Utterly and completely
12 Old as new again
13 Followed a trajectory
18 __-Chandon champagne
19 Talent
24 Sit for a shot
26 Vaporous
28 Information
29 Slaughter of Cooperstown
31 Wander
33 Thai cash
35 Beige
37 Killer whale
39 Inter __ (among others)
40 Spanish toehold in Africa, once
42 In a fog
43 Lahr or Lance
48 Tramp
50 Exhibition
52 Phase
53 Divans
55 Discovered
57 Diarist Nin
59 Man or Capri
61 Finished
63 Wide shoe size
64 Links hazard
66 Males
67 "A __ Good Men"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By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

2/18/05

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

T	A	R	O	S	■	G	M	A	N	■	I	R	M	A
I	N	E	R	T	■	R	A	C	E	■	N	E	A	L
L	I	F	E	I	S	A	G	R	E	A	T	B	I	G
■	■	■	■	G	E	N	I	E	■	S	E	I	Z	E
S	T	E	A	M	E	D	■	■	B	I	N	D	E	R
C	A	N	V	A	S	■	E	C	L	A	T	■	■	■
A	N	D	E	S	■	S	A	L	O	N	■	E	L	F
D	Y	E	S	■	T	H	R	O	W	■	P	A	A	R
S	A	D	■	G	R	A	N	T	■	P	A	R	T	I
■	■	■	P	R	O	D	S	■	A	L	L	T	H	E
P	A	N	O	U	T	■	■	P	L	A	S	H	E	S
A	G	A	I	N	■	A	D	U	L	T	■	■	■	■
P	A	I	N	T	O	N	I	T	Y	O	U	C	A	N
E	T	A	T	■	H	E	A	T	■	O	S	A	G	E
R	E	D	S	■	O	W	L	S	■	N	A	B	O	B

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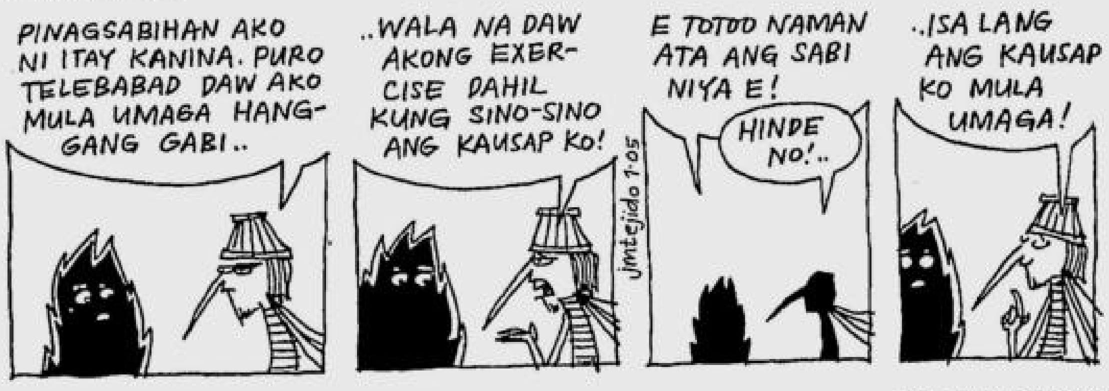
2/18/05

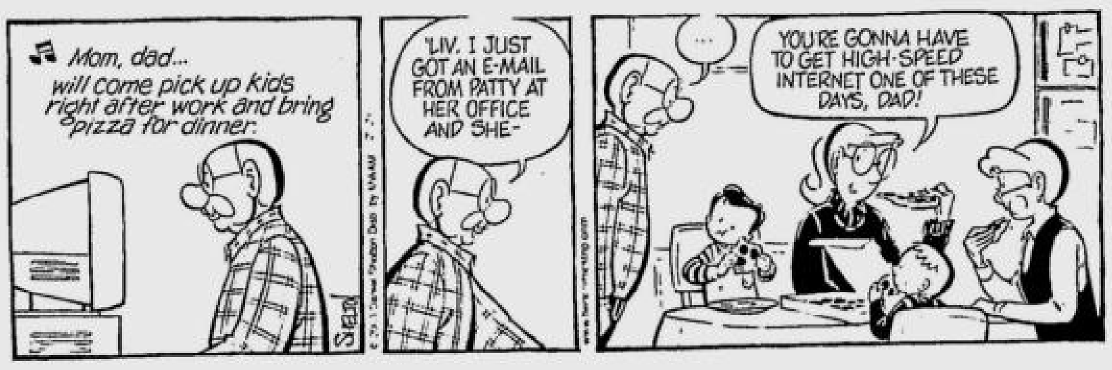
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PINAGSABIHAN AKO NI ITAY KANINA. PURO TELEBABAD DAW AKO MULA UMAGA HANGGANG GABI..
..WALA NA DAW AKONG EXERCISE DAHIL KUNG SINO-SINO ANG KAUSAP KO!
jmtejido 1-05
E TOTOO NAMAN ATA ANG SABI NIYA E!
HINDE NO!..
..ISA LANG ANG KAUSAP KO MULA UMAGA!

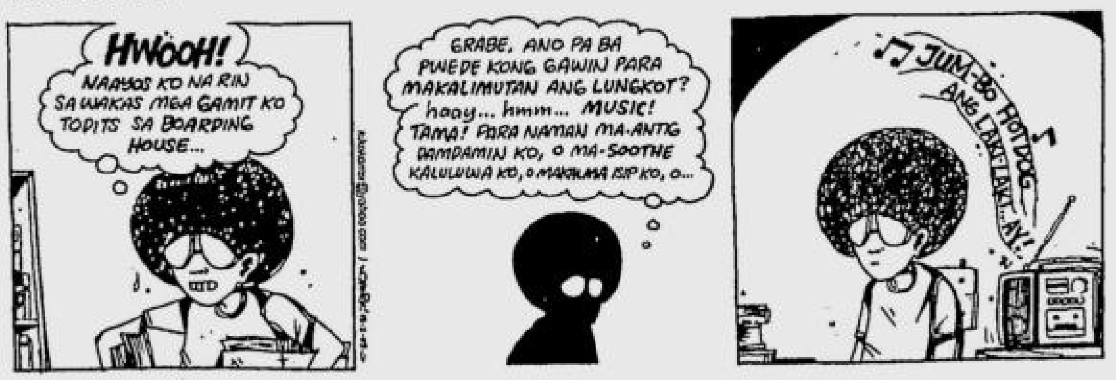
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


Mom, dad... will come pick up kids right after work and bring pizza for dinner.
'LIV. I JUST GOT AN E-MAIL FROM PATTY AT HER OFFICE AND SHE-
...
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO GET HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ONE OF THESE DAYS, DAD!

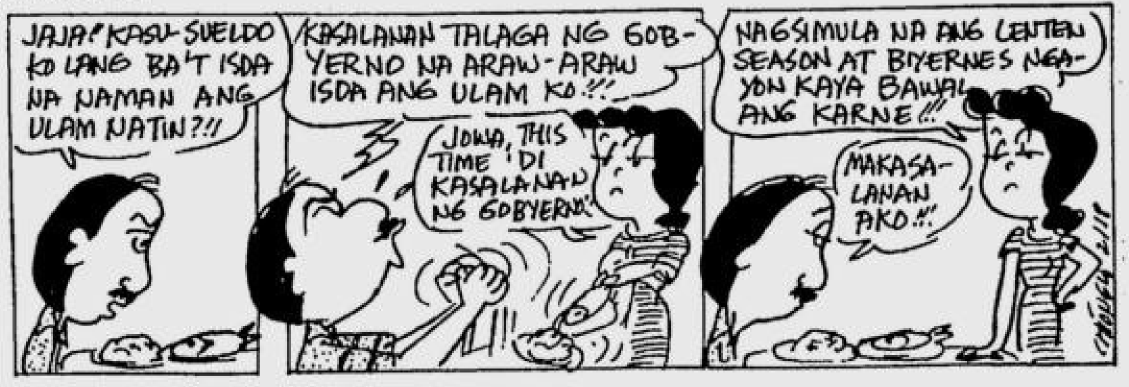
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! NAAYOS KO NA RIN SA WAKAS MGA GAMIT KO TODITS SA BOARDING HOUSE...
GRABE, ANO PA BA PWEDE KONG GAWIN PARA MAKALIMUTAN ANG LUNGKOT? haay... hmm... MUSIC! TAMA! PARA NAMAN MA-ANTIG DAMDAMIN KO, O MA-SOOTHE KALULUWA KO, O MAKALMA ISIP KO, O...
JUM-BO HOTDOG ANG LAKI-LAKI AY!

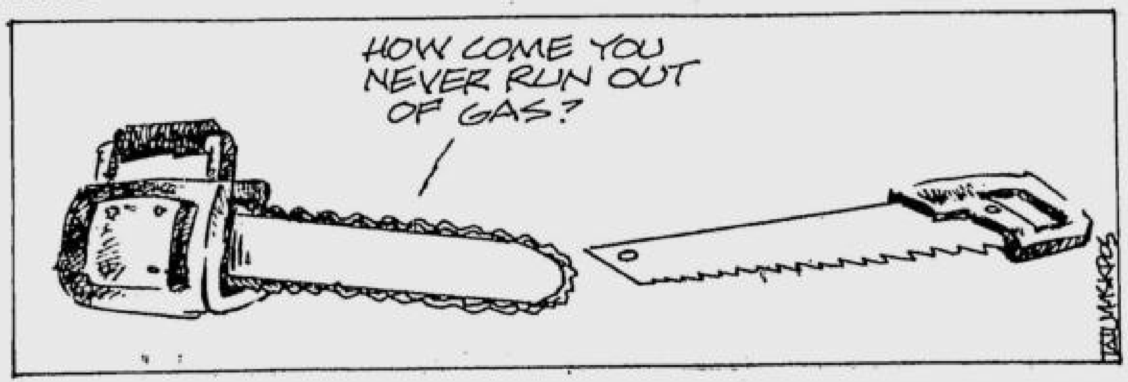
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JAJA! KASU-SUELDO KO LANG BA'T ISDA NA NAMAN ANG ULAM NATIN?!!
KASALANAN TALAGA NG GOBYERNO NA ARAW-ARAW ISDA ANG ULAM KO!!!
JOWA, THIS TIME 'DI KASALANAN NG GOBYERNO!
NAGSIMULA NA ANG LENTEN SEASON AT BIYERNES NGAYON KAYA BAWAL ANG KARNE!!!
MAKASALANAN AKO!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


HOW COME YOU NEVER RUN OUT OF GAS?

SPORTS

Stellar cast sign up for first Ateneo Aquathon

AQUATHLON, the equally lung-busting derivative event of triathlon, gets a boost this Saturday with the staging of the first Ateneo Aquathlon Open featuring a 600-meter swim and a 5-K run.

National team members, including Sandra Araullo, winner of the recent National Triathlon Championship; Mimi Lucas, LC Langit, Mikki Quilala and up-and-coming Joash Serrano, have confirmed their participation in the competition to be held on the Ateneo campus in Quezon City.

On the same day and venue, 50 or so kiddie athletes will see action in the Fit and Tri youth triathlon and aquathlon.

"Triathlon will make its debut in the Southeast Asian Games this year and there is the need to promote and drum up interest in the sport," said Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Trap) president Tom Carrasco.

The event is also sponsored by PowerBar, Mizuno, Nestea Lite, Nesvita and Nestle Drumstick. Participants will get free PowerBar and Powergel products, according to PowerBar brand manager Raul Cuevas.

Registration for the race organized by the Loyola Mountaineers is going on. On-site registration will be allowed on race day. Entry fee is P250 for Ateneo University students and P300 for other competitors. For inquiries, call EJ Gamboa at 0917-5324008.

Adamson batters down Tigresses in title opener

BETTER fielding and pitching power the Lady Falcons to victory in Game 1 of the UAAP women's softball title series.

DEFENDING champion Adamson flexed just enough muscle in downing University of Santo Tomas, 7-4, to take Game One of the best-of-three series for UAAP Season 67 women's softball crown yesterday at the UST field.

A three-run homer by second baseman Rachellè Yasas in the second inning touched off the Lady Falcons' nine-hit offensive against Esmeralda Tayag and Jedda Valencia.

Cloine Muyco also blasted a two-run homer in the fourth while Yocel Aguilar hit a two-run triple in the fifth.

The Lady Falcons go for the title in Game Two set at 1 p.m. tomorrow also at the Tigresses' turf.

Despite the headstart, Adamson coach Lenny de Jesus, the only catcher in UAAP history to win the Most Valuable Player award in softball, would not want her wards to be overconfident.

"UST is capable of coming back, but we want to win it tomorrow," de Jesus said.

If necessary, Game Three will be played Feb. 23 also at 1 p.m. at the UST field.

Milo net tourney uses peace theme

PEACE through Sports will be the tournament's theme when the Zamboanga City Lawn Tennis Association hosts the second leg of the 2005 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop on Feb. 18-20.

The Milo netfest is organized by the Children's Tennis Workshop, backed by adidas and sanctioned by Philta. It will be held in coordination with club president Dr. Michael Macrohon, Philta regional vice president Jimlani Imlan and Philta regional director James Ramirez.

Featured events are the boys' and girls' 18-under, 16-under, 14-under, 12-under and the unisex 10-under divisions.

ADIDAS NATIONALS

Zamboanga booters clinch qualifier

ZAMBOANGA overwhelmed Pagadian, 9-1, to win the West Mindanao qualifying round of the 2005 PFF-adidas National Men's Championship.

The squad was coached by Sallih Allian and led by Turkish players Fulkan Dikmen, Tahir Er and Tamer Bandogan.

Vicente Torres is president of the Zamboanga Football Association which will represent West Mindanao in the March 6-11 finals in Cagayan de Oro City.

Zamboanga joins early qualifiers Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Davao and host Cagayan de Oro. South Luzon qualifying is on-going with squads from Camarines Norte, Legazpi, Masbate, Camarines Sur and Quezon battling for the lone slot to the finals in Cagayan.

The North-South Luzon elimination kicks off Feb. 21 at the Philsports in Pasig City. It will feature teams from Baguio, Laguna, Oriental Mindoro, Rizal, Tarlac and reigning champs National Capital Region.

The 2005 PFF-adidas National Men's Championship is also backed by PFF sponsor-partners like SuperFerry, Petron and Red Ribbon Bakeshop.

THE ZAMBOANGA eleven makes the traditional pose before blasting Pagadian.

Ginebra visit caps PBA-Ever tour tomorrow

EXPECT the PBA Timeout@Ever Malls tour to draw the biggest crowd when it winds up its seven-week visit to the Ever-Gotesco chain of malls at Ever-Ortigas with PBA Philippine Cup champion Barangay Ginebra gracing the event tomorrow.

Aris Dimaunahan and Sunday Salvacion, two of the vital cogs in Ginebra's title romp over Talk 'N Text in the just-concluded PBA finals, will spearhead the visit by the league's most popular squad to Ever-Ortigas where they will meet with their fans in a day-long activity of fun and games beginning at 4 p.m.

Other Gin Kings gracing the affair are Bal David, Estong Ballesteros, Banjo Calpito, James Wallkvist and Migs Noble.

The Sta. Lucia Realtors take their turn on Feb. 24.

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A PASALUBONG & CAKE DECORATING DEMONSTRATION
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FEBRUARY 19, 2005,
1 to 5 pm Main Demo Area

" A TASTE OF FERNA"
BAKING DEMONSTRATION SCHEDULE
Feb. 18 "A TASTE OF FERNA"
Part I- 1:30 to 3:00 pm
Part II- 4:00 to 5:30 pm
Feb. 19 "A TASTE of FERNA",
with Ms. HENY SISON
Pasalubong Special
1 to 5 pm
Feb. 20 "A TASTE of FERNA"
Part III - 1:30 to 3:00 pm
Part IV- 3:30 to 5:00 pm

'Pilferage' report unfair to Esguerra

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I AM not in the habit of commenting on attacks on people in print. But I feel I must comment on a recent report linking successful Bulacan businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra to allegations of oil pilferage.

As far as I'm concerned, the report is unfair to Esguerra and should be corrected at once. I believe it is my duty to act as a watchdog for an honest and objective journalism.

Recall that a few years back, another popular sportsman, former PBA commissioner Rudy Salud, was himself a victim of unfounded and irresponsible reports when he was linked to the drug menace.

Some people simply do not know the real Hermie Esguerra.

A just and compassionate man, multi-awarded Esguerra became rich and famous because he knows what it takes to succeed.

"When I go into something, I really work hard to excel," he had said in an interview. "I study everything there is to know about a particular project, be it in business or sports."

Popularly known as the owner of super horse Wind Blown, Esguerra inspires people with his work ethics. In just five years, he equaled, if not surpassed, the achievements of the big names in Philippine horse racing.

Proof of this are his numerous awards as many-time "Horse Owner of the Year" from the prestigious Philippine Sportswriters Association, the Philippine Racing Commission, the Metropolitan Association of Race Horse Owners, the Philippine Thoroughbred and Breeders Organization, to name a few. Proof also is the current performance of his racing stable which is No. 1 in the country today.

Esguerra has boosted the racing industry to new levels of excellence and appreciation aside from giving golden opportunities and respect to the jockeys, trainers, grooms and stable hands (sota). A golf and basketball enthusiast, he is also a staunch supporter of our national athletes and other sports associations such as golf and softball, for which he stands as "sport godfather."

In my view, the report linking him to alleged oil pilferage is uncalled for. As one columnist said, "The reputation of Herma Shipping and Transport Corp. is something that Herma Group chair Hermie Esguerra has carefully built for 17 years. One does not throw away that kind of reputation and a billion-peso business by engaging in pilferage."

The vicious attack did not hurt me personally, but it hurts nonetheless.

It hurts because the author of the report did not mention the fact that Esguerra and his staff worked long, hard hours to achieve success and should get the credit they richly deserve. It hurts because Esguerra and Co. did not get a fair and objective treatment from the writer. The report is full of lies and distortions. A responsible writer must try to be accurate at all times. I'm pretty sure the writer hardly even knows Esguerra.

***

LESS, GIVING MORE. There is no question that the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984 was one of the most profitable in the Games' history. The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, headed by marketing wizard Peter Ueberroth, showed that the time was ripe to check the commercial clutter which had proved financially disastrous to previous Olympic host cities. Less, giving more, was the philosophy in the financially rewarding Los Angeles Games. LA's triumph was in part achieved by reducing the number of corporate supporters from an unwieldy 628 at the 1976 Montreal Olympics to just 34 official sponsors, 64 suppliers and 65 licensees in LA.

The International Olympic Committee has since then adopted this compact marketing strategy which guaranteed exclusivity or lockout for all sponsors and has been an IOC requirement for all subsequent Games.

That is why, I'm supporting a lockout or exclusivity clause for all major sponsors of this year's SEA Games. We should honor the Globe Package sponsorship contract signed by Philsoc chair Obet Pagdanganan with Globe Telecom for a reported 100 million. A lockout or exclusivity is a tried and tested formula for success. And nobody argues with success, *di ba*?

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 990

Race 1—1. Fabiola 2. I Remain 3. My Lucky Date 4. Mercury Rising

Race 2—1. Chariot of Fire/Coromell 2. Hellfire 3. Oliver Sun Joy

Race 3—1. Jonny Lou 2. Run Doding Fly 3. Serendipity 4. Great Year

Race 4—1. Shades of Red/Sound Value 2. Earl's Game 3. Hurry Connection 4. Money for Shelltox

Race 5—1. Speed Machine 2. Windlass 3. Muria Makiling/Balwarte 4. Puppy Dog Tail

Race 6—1. Magpakailanman 2. Golden Lance 3. Run Like D Wind 4. Cause of Our Joy 5. Silent Wind

Race 7—1. Sweet Inspiration 2. Diamond Charlie/Good Day 3. Trader's Choice 4. Chances Are

Race 8—1. Seeing Red 2. Western Dancer 3. Sea of Galilee 4. Valiente

Race 9—1 Fancy Dancer 2. Boy from Brazil 3 Blitzkrieg 4. Express Strike 5. Maximus 6. Play it Again

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Presence of malice

Give us TV shows that will make this country a little better. Is that asking too much?–Gil Portes, movie director

AGA MUHLACH sore about GMA 7 'exposé.'

ETHEL BOOBA threatens to sue ABS-CBN.

By Bayani San Diego
Contributor
(Conclusion)

INQUIRER Entertainment columnist Nestor U. Torre wrote in this month's issue of PJR Reports, published by the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility: "Stress on gossip… makes the media stress the personal rather than the professional, and the scandalous rather than the truly newsworthy. It undermines the development of the entertainment audience by appealing to its unthinking, controversy-loving side."

Award-winning movie and TV scriptwriter and director Jose Javier Reyes agrees: "It doesn't require that much intelligence and discernment to contemplate whether a certain hunk has made a gay sex video or whether a particular celebrity is struggling with kleptomania … [compared to] discussing the VAT."

Torre wrote: "The really significant developments in show business are glossed over, while the real or concocted personal excesses of celebrities are almost exclusively focused on."

"It's not just immoral, it's amoral," adds Reyes, who has been asked to join ABS-CBN's talk show "ETK" as panelist, precisely for his fearless opinions. "It's no longer enough to pry into the private life of celebrities. Now, the effectivity of shows is measured in terms of the amount of scandals they air."

He concedes that the raging network war is a big contributing factor to the situation. "These *chismis* shows are aiming their bullets at the [stars] of the rival stations."

Case in point: Ethel Booba, a GMA 7 talent, is threatening to sue ABS-CBN for airing what she says was an unauthorized "conversation" that she had with one of the staffers of "The Buzz" on her alleged sex video. She claims ABS-CBN obtained the "exclusive" interview without her expressed consent.

On the other hand, GMA 7's "Star Talk" came out with an exposé on former starlet Olivia Ortiz's over-a-decade-old live-in relationship with the now-married actor Aga Muhlach, an ABS-CBN talent.

Does this make the purported controversies retaliatory in nature?

"If this has become network policy, someone should put a stop to it," Reyes says, sounding exasperated.

Word from the networks

Asked for possible ways to rectify the situation, the usually loquacious Gil Portes, another award-winning movie director, is suddenly at a loss for words. "Honestly, I don't know," he sighs. There seems to be no stopping it [because] we're ratings-obsessed. I just hope, sincerely hope, that the networks soon realize how precious the medium is. That it is, in fact, not an 'idiot box'."

He poses a challenge to the major networks: "Give us shows that will make this country a little better than what it is right now. Is that asking too much?"

In a statement, Jayce C. Perlas, head of GMA 7's entertainment program publicity, relayed the station's stand to INQUIRER Entertainment: "Whether the sources of the show biz items are tabloid articles, web forums or phone-in questions from viewers, we believe show biz talk shows provide a venue for the show biz personalities in question to air their side, whether to deny, comment or confirm the issue at hand."

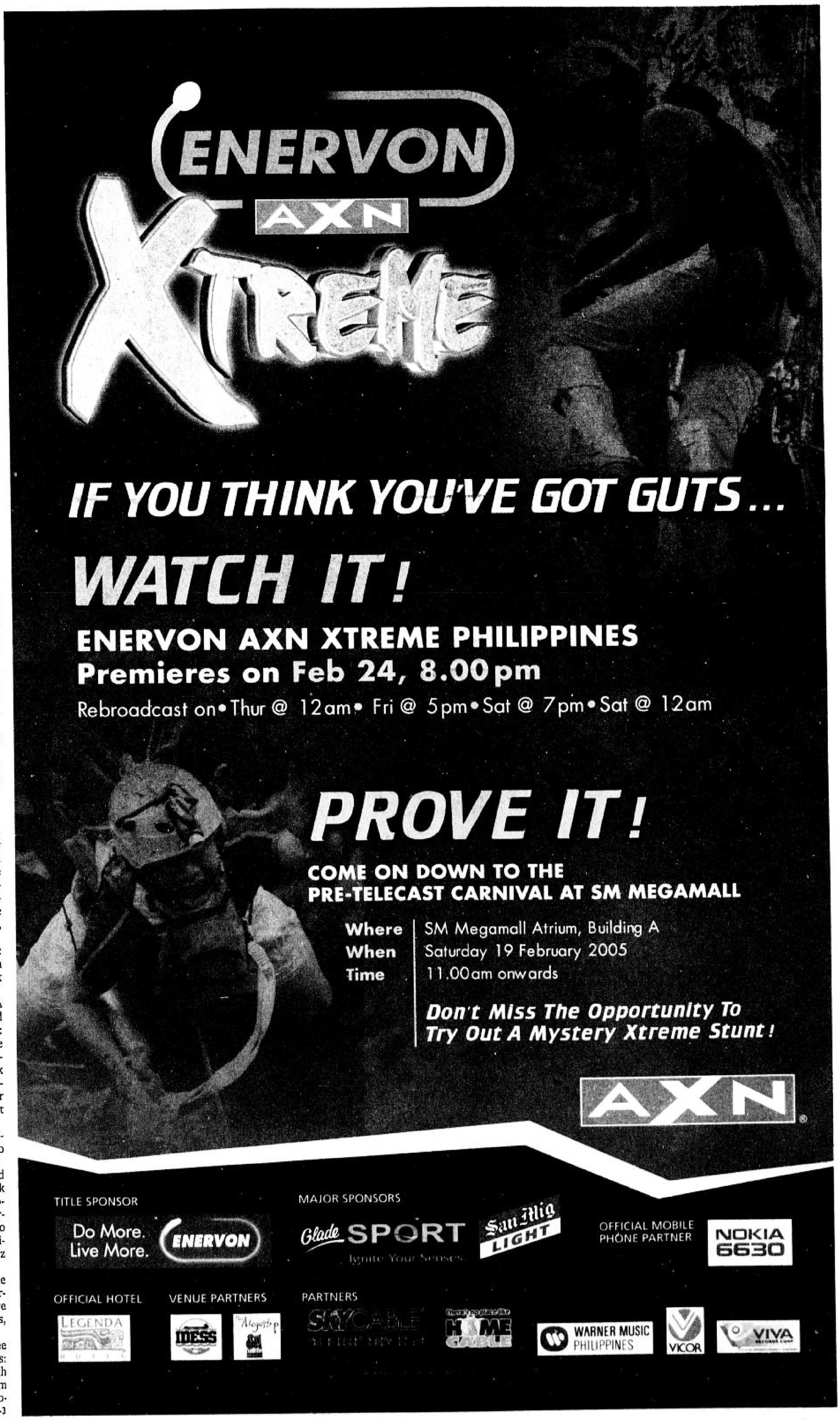
ABS-CBN takes more or less the same position. Media relations executive Leah Salterio said, also in a statement:

"ABS-CBN believes that TV stations should continue producing show biz-oriented talk shows as long as these serve as venues for promoting Filipino entertainment, for media personalities to communicate to their fans or to clear an issue they are facing, and not as vehicles for biased or sensationalized show biz news.

"Entertainment is an integral part of the Filipinos' lifestyle, and there is a considerable demand from viewers to know more about their favorite stars, TV programs, films, events, etc.

"As of the moment, ABS-CBN has three shows dedicated to delivering show biz news: 'The Buzz,' 'ETK' and 'Showbiz No. 1.' The high ratings and popularity of these shows affirm that stories about celebrities interest the pub-

PRESENCE/ A2-3



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Good showcase for promising young comedians

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ONE of the more viewable new shows on Channel 2 is the Kiddie comedy program, "Goin' Bulilit." It's "Ang TV" with a fresh batch of perky child performers, some of whom can be expected to become popular comics in the months to come.

The show's best suit is its cast of bright, young talents. We feel, however, that they are sometimes used in ways that don't take full advantage of their youthful quality, but instead shunt them off into less juvenile directions.

For instance, a number of the show's skits and blackout gags require the kids to play spouses, sweethearts, etc.

We know that it is deemed cute in this country for kids to play little adults, but the jokes that this engenders sometimes risk coming off as too naughty for the child talents to get involved with, and could thus get the show in trouble.

We suggest, therefore, that the program stay away from "adult" material and characters, especially when they involve love, crushes, dating, getting drunk, etc.

The show also features too many old jokes. We know that this gives the program a "nostalgic" quality that some viewers may find charming, but the show's telecast last Feb. 13 simply had too many of them, leading to the suspicion that the production's writers were taking it easy, instead of thinking up new jokes of their own.

The program's other regular comedy features include a spoof of "The Buzz" and the show's version of a *chinovela*, with kids playing adult roles, but with their voices dubbed by grown-ups.

This is supposed to be a funny twist, and it *is* bemusing, but its surprise value tends to pall very quickly, so it should be supplemented with more eventful comedy scripting.

Despite these cautionary notes, "Goin' Bulilit" appears to be clicking with viewers, and that's all to the good.

Even better, the show is providing an important showcase and workshop for some promising child comics. We trust that some of them will eventually become stars, and thus add to our thin roster of really talented young performers on the TV screen.

THE CAST of "Goin' Bulilit," with director Edgar Mortiz: "Ang TV," with a new batch of perky performers

Feedback

FROM **Loi R. Landicho** of Makati City: "**Pepe Diokno** and **James Gabrillo**'s assessment of ABS-CBN's new shows was acerbic and harsh, yet telling and amusing. I would just like to take exception to their approbation of the network's 'originality' in producing 'Kamao,' the 'first reality boxing show,' featuring 11 boxers who will train under world-class pugilist **Manny Pacquiao**.

"Excuse me, but the show's concept is neither original nor trailblazing. Early last year, NBC produced 'The Contender,' a boxing reality series by reality TV behemoth **Mark Burnett**. Sixteen fighters were mentored by **Sylvester Stallone** and boxing legend **Sugar Ray Leonard**. (Cable channel AXN will start airing the series soon.)

"Fox Network later joined the fray with its own show of the same genre. Titled 'The Next Great Champ,' it was hosted by boxing's Golden Boy, Oscar dela Hoya, and had its premiere telecast in September 2004.

"Thus, to claim that 'Kamao' is original is both presumptuous and ambitious. Tell me, when was the last time we saw something really original on local television?"

'Boys of H Company'

FEB. 19 marks the 60th anniversary of one of the most famous incidents of World War II—the US invasion of Iwo Jima. The small island 660 miles South of Tokyo was crucial to the US, and the Japanese spent years "digging in" in preparation for the inevitable attack.

Thus, when the invasion started, every inch of ground the Marines took was at extreme cost. The battle raged for more than 30 days. Nearly 7,000 American soldiers were killed and more than 20,000 were injured. For their part, the Japanese lost more than 21,000 men. Of the 80 US Marines awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II, 22 of them were at Iwo Jima!

"Boys of company H" is a two-hour special. It will be aired from 9 to 11 p.m. on Feb. 19.

Hot Joints Volume 2

FOR THE hottest hip-hop numbers, get a copy of "Hot Joints Volume 2." It showcases fave tunes from key acts like D12 ("How Come"), 50 Cent ("If I Can't"), G Unit ("Poppin Theme Thangs"), Kanye West ("Through the Wire"), Jay-Z ("99 Problems") and Nelly ("Flap Your Wings").

It comes with a bonus DVD featuring exclusive content from D12, 50 Cent, Lloyd Banks and Young Buck.

Feedback

FROM **Lorenzo S. Abacan** of Meycauayan, Bulacan: "There are many Pinoy Kids who go beyond the experts' prescribed hours of TV viewing for children. Thus, they have less time to read, play, socialize, imagine and create. This in turn contributes significantly to the growing number of tots who are obese, unable to read, can't mingle with others, are unresourceful, etc.

"In response to this, we would like to invite all parents, teachers and other child advocates to join our Sophia School's observance of 'TV-Free Day for Kids' every last Saturday of the month, which we started last Jan. 29. All we have to do is encourage every child under our care to not watch TV on the last Saturday of each month. Instead, they can try alternative activities like storytelling, mini-picnic, walk in the park, conducting simple experiments, fun cooking, etc.

"This gives them the opportunity to understand and realize that there are other, more meaningful, things to do aside from spending their time in front of the tube. Thus, we can be assured that our children will grow up into well-balanced people who value moderate TV viewing." (Contact sophiaschool@yahoo.com.)

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5 CHILDREN GP 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00	RAY PG13 1:15,4:15,7:15,10:20	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA PG13 1:50,4:40,7:30,10:15
SIDEWAYS R18 12:15,2:45,5:15,7:45,10:10	SHALL WE DANCE GP 1:00,3:15,5:30,7:45,10:00	CONSTANTINE PG13 11:50,2:30,5:10,7:50,10:30

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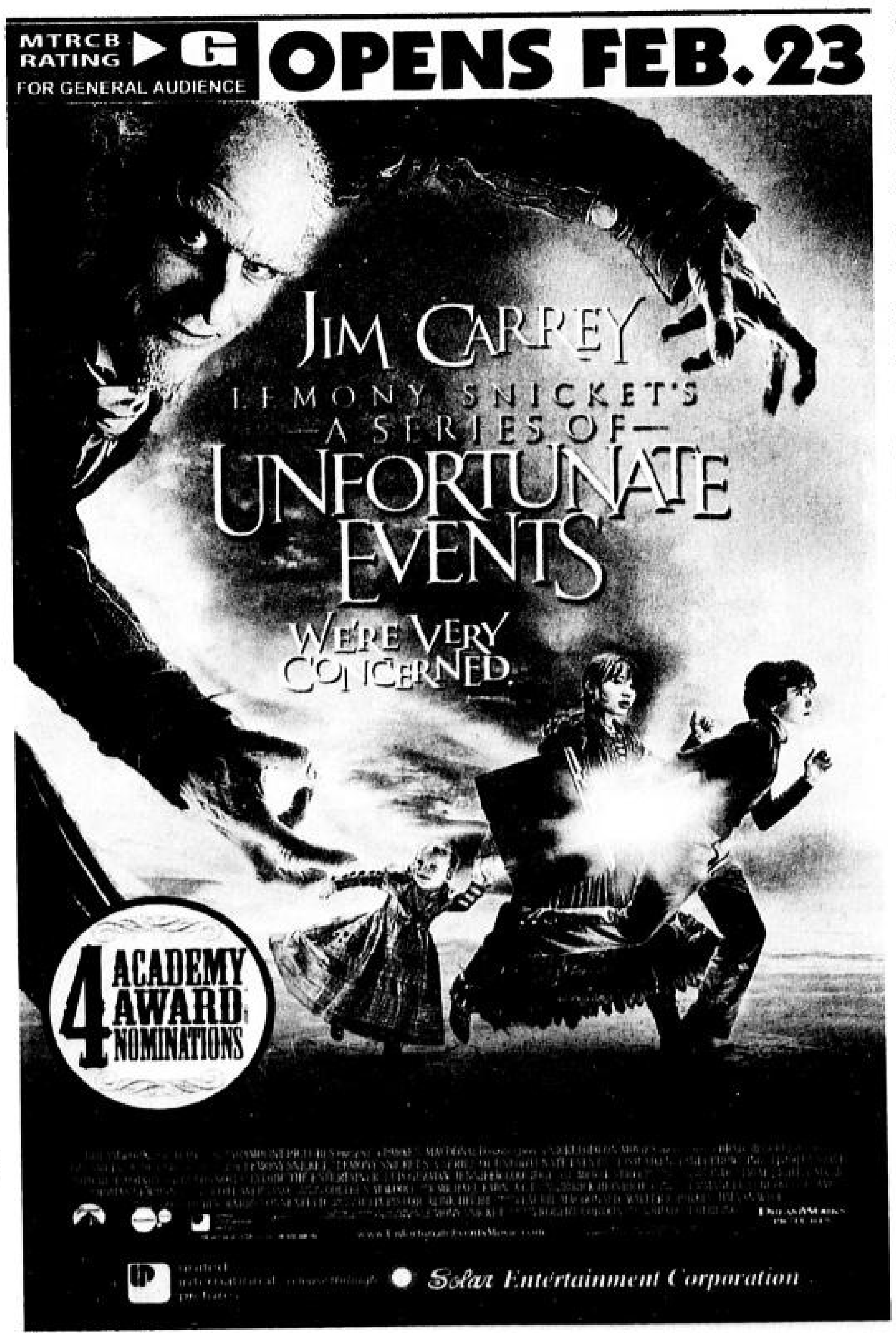

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SHOW STOPPER

TOMORROW'S stars were given a glimpse of the future when GMA Artist Center premiered the film trilogy, "Kilig...Pintig ...Yanig," at the Glorietta I cinemas recently.

The glittering affair launched GMAAC's roster of 32 new actors, who all appeared in the digital film.

The young stars arrived in a string of sleek BMWs. In true Hollywood fashion, they walked down a red carpet and proceeded for photo-ops to walls bearing the emblems of the events major sponsors—Ayala Cinemas and the cosmetics emporium Beauty Bar.

Hosts Iza Calzado and Arnold Clavio welcomed the star-studded audience. GMA Artist Center AVP Ida Henares gave the opening remarks, then called the 32 new "graduates" onstage.

Beauty Bar presented the VIP guests with "loot bags."

Right before the screening proper, GMA 7 EVP Jimmy Duavit congratulated the young stars.

Spotted were celebs Mark Herras, Jennylyn Mercado, Yasmien Kurdi, Ranier Castillo, Sherwin Ordonez, Alessandra de Rossi, Brad Turvey, Regine Tolentino, Pia Guanio, Eddie Garcia, and Armida Siguion-Reyna.

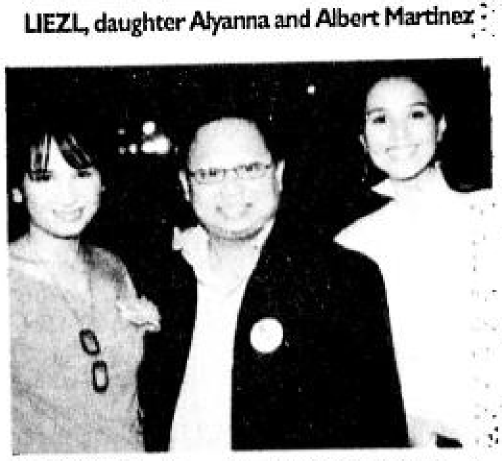
PIA Guanio

BETTINA Carlos

MARK Herras and Jennylyn Mercado

LIEZL, daughter Alyanna and Albert Martinez

(From left) SAM Ortiz of Ayala Cinemas, Malu Francisco of Stores Specialists Inc., Jimmy Duavit—EVP GMA Network, Raffy Prats—VP Ayala Cinemas, and Albert Martinez



REGINE Tolentino, Arnold Clavio and Iza Calzado

Presence of malice

From page A2-1

lic. More importantly, these shows are not predominantly meant to foster intrigues, controversies or scandals, but to let viewers take a peek at the lives of their celebrities, whom they just see playing roles in either the big or small screen."

Where to bring dissenting opinions? Could the Kapisanan ng mga Broadcasters ng Pilipinas (KBP), Film Academy of the Philippines (FAP), Kapisanan ng mga Artista ng Pelikulang Pilipino (KAPP), Professional Artist Managers, Inc. (PAMI), or Ad Board step in as interested groups?

Is the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) aware of these goings-on?

The issue: public welfare

"This is no longer a question of press freedom," Reyes insists. "The issue is public welfare already. Television is such a powerful medium because it enters the privacy of your home and invades your consciousness."

In utter frustration, Reyes demands: "Where are the sanctimonious guardians of morality? I hope they are not enjoying the scandals themselves."

PAMI founding member Ed Instrella speaks "not just as a talent manager," but also as a concerned citizen: "My fear is that TV scandals served up on a daily basis could be adding to the reasons that people are staying away from the movies."

Reyes concurs: "We are killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. Look at the state of TV, cinema, of Philippine entertainment in general. It is bankrupt—not only financially, but also morally, intellectually and culturally."

The gossip mill itself seems to be big business, though.

"There are at least two *chismis* shows or segments on TV every day," Instrella notes. "If you multiply that by seven, then you have 14 shows every week. These shows need to be filled with juicy stories. What happens if no major scandals break that week? Would they resort to creating controversies or dredging up old ones?"

A *chismis* show offered one newcomer P15,000 to fuel a brewing scandal involving another neophyte, according to a source who requested anonymity. The same source hints that two starlets made P10,000 each for their recent explosive revelations.

In a nutshell, Torre described the situation in his essay, thus: "On point of professional standards and ethics, entertainment journalism in this country has been substantially, if not severely compromised."

This is a bombshell more deafening, and potentially more damaging to the industry, than Ethel Booba's alleged sex video and Aga's alleged aborted love child combined.

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THX 1 CONSTANTINE	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 CONSTANTINE	1 CONSTANTINE
2 SIDEWAYS	2 CONSTANTINE	2 SIDEWAYS	6 CONSTANTINE	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 CONSTANTINE	2 WITHOUT A PADDLE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN	3 5 CHILDREN & IT	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 CONSTANTINE	7 RAY	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA	3 ALEX & EMMA
4 DREAMBOY	4 DREAMBOY	4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 RAY	4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5 THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 SIDEWAYS	5

GB1 GREENBELT 1
1 SIDEWAYS
2 CONSTANTINE

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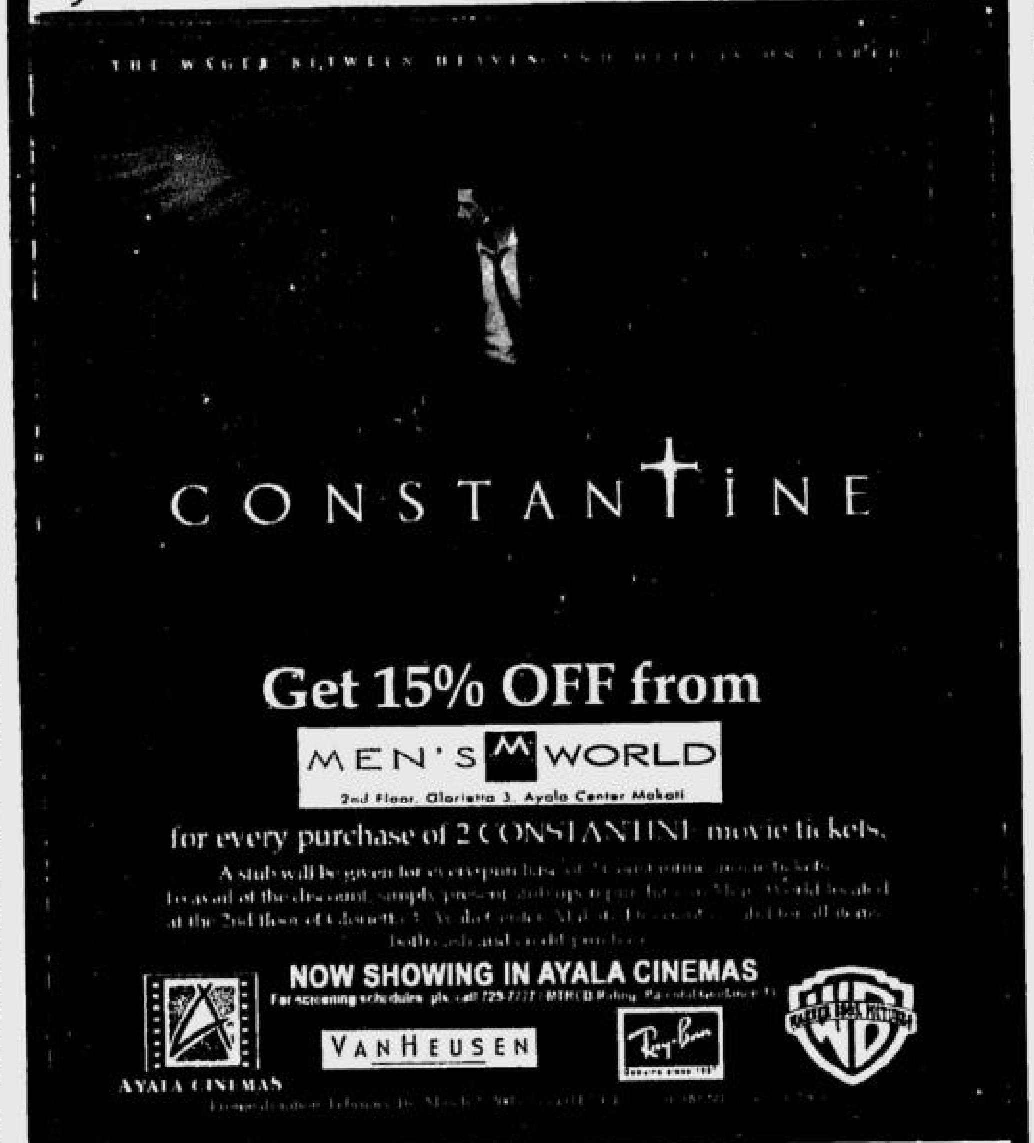

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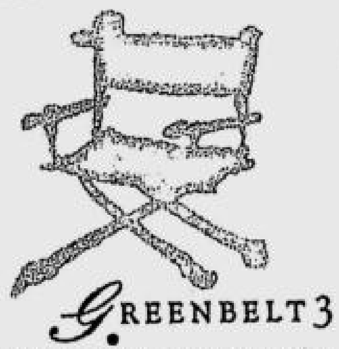

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GALLERIA

1 CONSTANTINE • THX
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

2 CONSTANTINE
10:50 1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30

3 RAY
11:05 1:55 4:45 7:35 10:00

4 5 CHILDREN AND IT
11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 SIDEWAYS
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

7 DREAMBOY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

9 MEET THE FOCKERS
1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00

10 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

ERMITA 536 7809 to 12

1 CONSTANTINE
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

2 5 CHILDREN AND IT
10:10 12:05 2:00 3:55 5:50 7:45 9:45

3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10:20 1:05 4:00 6:55 9:50

4 DREAMBOY
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

5 SIDEWAYS
10:20 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10:15 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

7 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
10:20 12:30 2:;50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 5 CHILDREN AND IT
10:50 12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
12:15 3:15 6:15 9:15

3 SIDEWAYS
10:40 1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
11:20 1:45 4:05 6:30 9:00

5 CONSTANTINE
12:05 2:45 5:25 8:05 10:30

6 DREAMBOY
11:20 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:30 10:30

7 BATH HOUSE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
12:05 2:45 5.25 8:05 10:30

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31

1 CONSTANTINE
11:50 2:40 5:30 8:25

2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:00

3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
11:20 2:20 5:20 8:25

4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
1:00 3:20 5:50 8:25

5 DREAMBOY
10:20 12:50 3:20 5:50 8:25

6 ALFIE
11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

7 ELEKTRA
12:30 2:30 4:30 6:30 8:30

8 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

PIONEER 687 5378

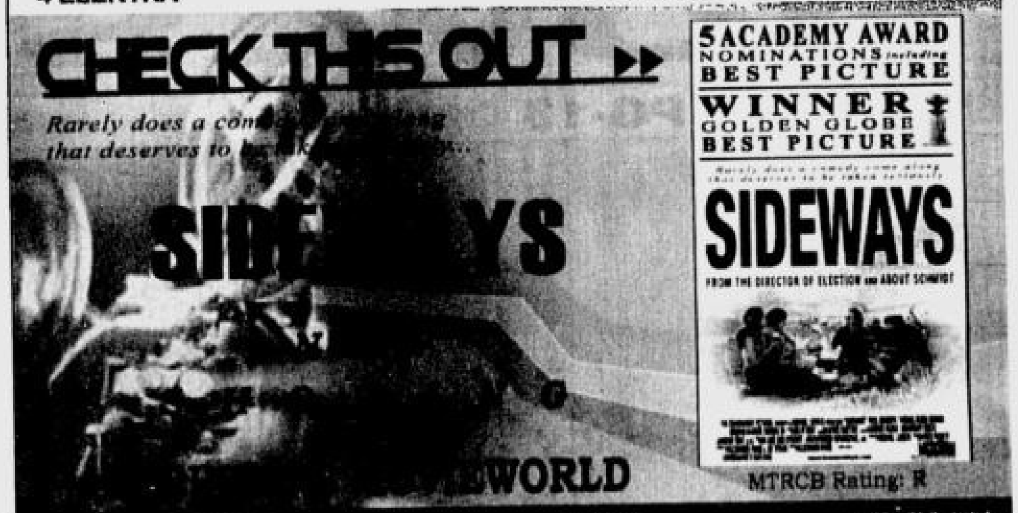
1 CONSTANTINE
2 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3 5 CHILDREN AND IT
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

CITISQUARE MALABON 280-2575

1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ELEKTRA

CAINTA 240 4661

1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 DREAMBOY
3 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4 CONSTANTINE



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SIDEWAYS
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MTRCB Rating: R

STA. ROSA

1 CONSTANTINE
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 HELLWOLF
5 DREAMBOY

LIPA

1 CONSTANTINE
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 FLIGHT OF PHOENIX
4 DREAMBOY
5 MEET THE FOCKERS

DASMARIÑAS

1 DREAMBOY
2 ASSAULT ON PRECINT 13
3 CONSTANTINE
4 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

ANGELES

1 CONSTANTINE
2 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3 DREAMBOY
4 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

IMUS

1 ALFIE
2 DREAMBOY
3 A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4 CONSTANTINE
5 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
6 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

STARMILLS

1 SHALL WE DANCE
2 DREAMBOY
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 ALFIE
5 CONSTANTINE
6 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE

BACOLOD

1 MEET THE FOCKERS
2 CONSTANTINE
3 SHALL WE DANCE
4 IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE
5 DREAMBOY
6 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

ILOILO

1 CONSTANTINE
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 MEET THE FOCKERS
5 DREAMBOY
6 SHALL WE DANCE

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'Shark Tale' on DVD earns more than film

LOS ANGELES — DreamWorks Animation SKG Inc. on Tuesday said its Academy Award-nominated animated film "Shark Tale" sold more than 6 million units in its first week in domestic home video and DVD release.

The sales generated an estimated $80 million in retail sales since its Feb. 8 release, beating the movie's first-week box office take of $56 million, DreamWorks said in a statement.

"Shark Tale," an undersea romp featuring the voices of Will Smith and Robert DeNiro, was nominated for the 77th Annual Academy Awards, set for Feb. 27. Reuters

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PG-13

2 CONSTANTINE
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING SCHEDULE
PG-13

3 PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
PLEASE CALL FOR SCREENING SCHEDULE
PG-13

4 SIDEWAYS
11:30, 2:20, 5:10
8:00, 10:40
PG-13

star group of cinemas movie guide
IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
Tel. No. 726.81.50
3 Let The Love Begin
4 Constantine
5 Saranggani

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
1 Flight Of The Phoenix
2 Saranggani
3 Let The Love Begin
4 Dreamboy
5 Constantine
6 Phantom Of The Opera

starmall LAS PIÑAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
1 Let The Love Begin
2 Reserved

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SIDEWAYS
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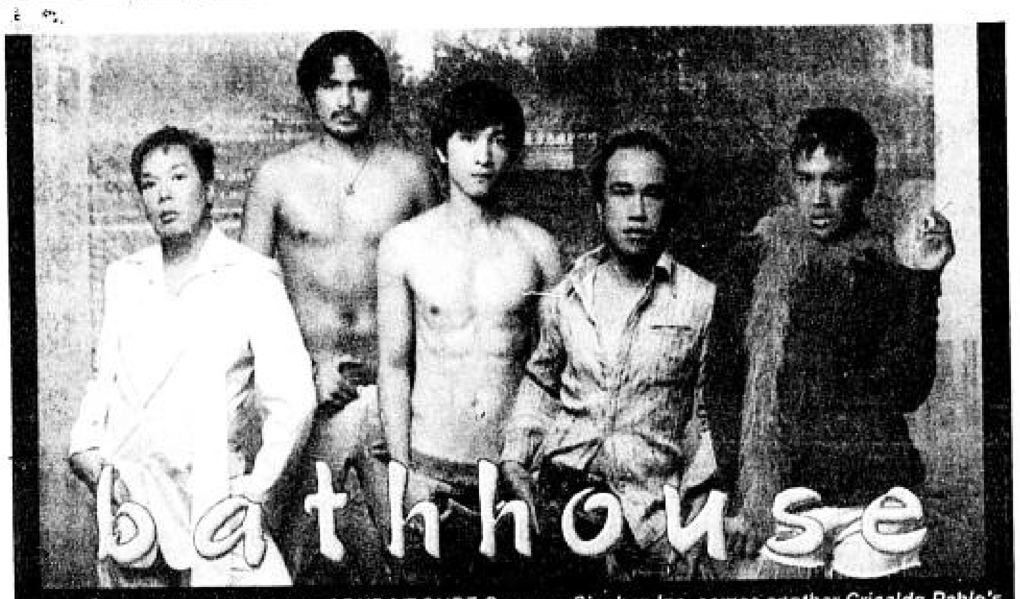

From the makers of DUDA/DOUBT Grupong Sinehan Inc. comes another Crisaldo Pablo's digital movie about love and relationship.
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Editor **Louie C. Camino**
Assistant Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

5 minutes or a date with Angel Locsin

"I COULD be happy just walking in the park with a special someone."

By Marinel R. Cruz

SEXY young actress Angel Locsin is ecstatic about the box-office success of her latest movie, "Let the Love Begin." But she says her love life is not as exciting.

"I didn't have a Valentine date," Angel tells INQUIRER Entertainment. "In fact, I've not had a boyfriend since Miko [Sotto] passed away."

Miko fell to his death from his ninth floor condominium unit in Mandaluyong City more than a year ago. "He will always be special to me," Angel says. "Right now, I'm just trying to move on. I'm sure Miko is happy wherever he is, and I know he also wants me to be happy."

You're not ready for another relationship?

I started dating guys only recently. I hardly enjoy [going out] because of my work in "Mulawin" and [until lately] "Let the Love Begin." I would go for days without sleep sometimes. It's been hard.

What's your ideal date?

As long as I'm with a special someone, I'm happy—even if we're just walking in the park, or on the beach. I'd like it if we could spend the night sitting on the shore and talking [or just] gazing at the stars.

Where would this beach be?

It has to be in Boracay. I've been there twice but I was working both times, so I couldn't really enjoy myself.

If you and your date had P500,000 to spend on just that one date, what would you do with it?

I'll let him do what he wants; I'll just give suggestions. If he wants to go to the beach, I'll take him to Boracay. I'll ask if he wants to go to the spa there, or ride the jet ski ...

Would you spend money on someone you love?

Sure. It's just money. If I know something that would make my partner happy, I would gladly buy it for him.

Has Richard (Gutierrez, her screen partner) ever asked you out on a date?

Yeah, but not the type I consider serious dating. We just eat out or watch a movie. Casual *lang*.

Do you like him?

He's very down to earth. I've never heard him complain about work. I like guys I connect with *pag nag-uusap kami* (when we converse). I don't like guys who are fake—they always put their best foot forward. You realize later *na lang* how irritating they [really] are.

We all know it's hard to find a guy who's really loyal, especially in my line of work. Some guys ask me out but I know they're not serious. I don't go out with guys I'm not interested in. I'd rather be with someone I'm truly comfortable with.

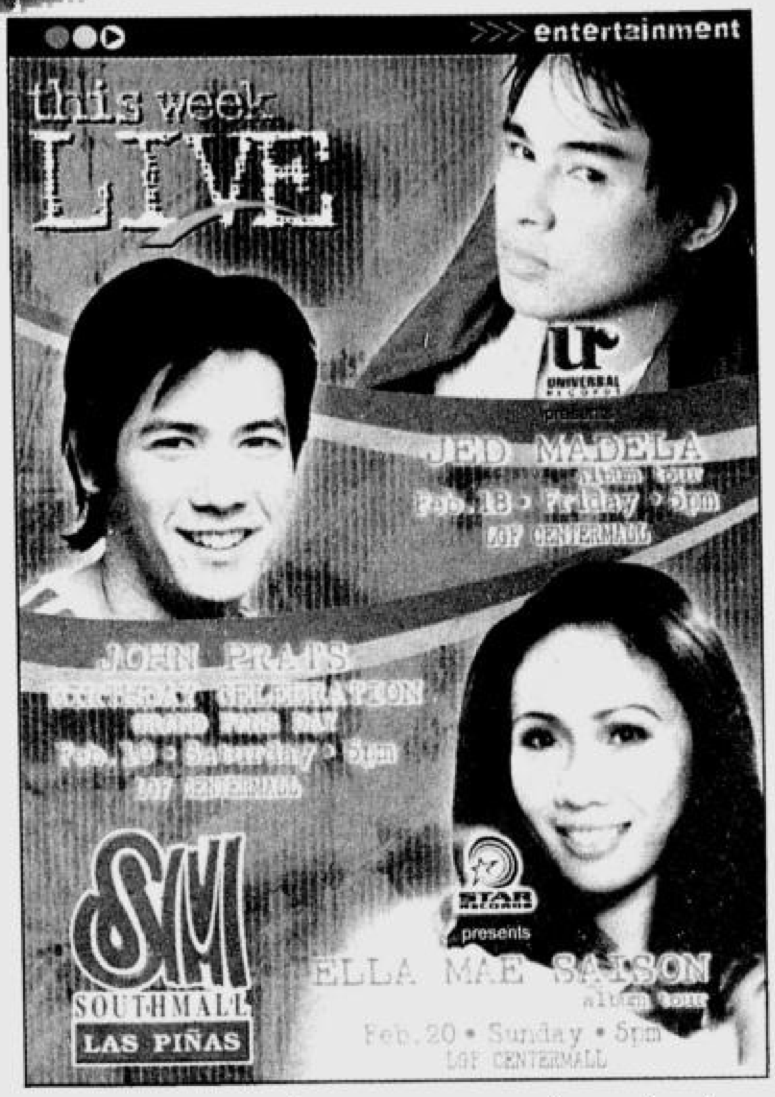
What is your dream guy like?

He should be tall and dark, athletic. He should be respectful toward others. He should be intelligent... *madiskarte sa buhay* (street smart). I don't like guys who are boastful. I also don't like guys who are vain, because I'm not. Many are like that. They look in the mirror all the time. *Nakakainis* (It's annoying).

Richard has been the subject of negative news stories lately. Do you sometimes give him advice?

I know Richard. He's a good person. He could

5 MINUTES/ A3-2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KEANU REEVES hams it up without meaning to, but it works.

Comic-book hero canonized

By Lito B. Zulueta

REVIEW

THE PRETERNATURAL conceit in "Constantine" updates the comic-book hero many times over—from infinity to eternity. John Constantine is not your ordinary superhero from outer space, your noble avenger, or your superman molted and metamorphosed by scientific slip-up.

He's a person with average physical strength but possessed of a supernatural, not superhuman, gift: the ability to see demons and challenge them. "Constantine" does not have superheroes in a war of the worlds. It has a hero doing battle with the universe. It's pandemonium out there.

John Constantine (Keanu Reeves) is your man-in-black exorcist, stylish in his dark suit and able to flush out demons from possessed souls without canonical backup. He is the Catholic church's best-kept secret; clerics who turn chicken at the sight of demonic possession run to him for help. He performs the job as a matter of rote and repentance since, unable to bear the burden of his gift, he had once tried to kill himself.

No choice

So now he has no choice but to go on living and making penance for what he did, or else go straight to hell, suicide being a capital sin— the sin of sins—in the Catholic scheme of things. God's vengeance is rammed on him without sugarcoating by the angel Gabriel (Tilda Swinton), equally stylish in a plaid suit (of course, if Constantine could see demons, he could also see angels).

When her twin sister commits suicide, Angela (Rachel Weisz) is crestfallen that the church wouldn't bless the body. Convinced it was not a suicide, she contracts the supernatural detective and learns that her sister's death conceals a conspiracy in which Lucifer's spawn is about to be born through a human agent (even the anti-Christ, like Christ, has to be incarnated) and, strangely according to an ancient prophetic text, to be assisted by a champion of the good.

Armed with a submachine gun shaped like a cross and a host of holy secret weapons that look more like James Bond's than sacrosanct,

COMIC-BOOK/ A3-2

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CONSTANTINE

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CONSTANTINE
MTRCB RATING: PG 13

RAY
MTRCB RATING: PG 13

5 CHILDREN AND IT
MTRCB RATING: GP

SALSA
MTRCB Rating: PG13

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10:05 LFS / 10:35 LMF / 12:35 END

2 CLOSED

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1	ELEKTRA
2	CONSTANTINE
3	RAY
4	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
5	5 CHILDREN AND IT
6	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
7	SHALL WE DANCE
8	DREAMBOY
9	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10	CONSTANTINE
11	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
12	MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city fairview

1	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2	ELEKTRA
3	MEET THE FOCKERS
4	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
5	ALFIE
6	CONSTANTINE
7	CONSTANTINE
8	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
9	DREAMBOY
10	SHALL WE DANCE
11	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
12	LET THE LOVE BEGIN

sm city north edsa

1	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2	ELEKTRA
3	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4	MEET THE FOCKERS
5	5 CHILDREN AND IT
6	DREAMBOY
7	CONSTANTINE
8	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

sm city manila

1	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
3	ELEKTRA
4	CONSTANTINE
5	5 CHILDREN AND IT
6	CONSTANTINE
7	SHALL WE DANCE
8	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
9	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
10	MEET THE FOCKERS
11	DREAMBOY
12	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm city sta. mesa

1	PETA PLAY
2	DREAMBOY
3	CONSTANTINE
4	DREAMBOY
5	CONSTANTINE
6	5 CHILDREN AND IT
7	CONSTANTINE
8	WITHOUT A PADDLE
9	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
10	ELEKTRA

sm city southmall

1	DREAMBOY
2	PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
3	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
4	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5	MEET THE FOCKERS
6	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
7	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
8	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
9	ELEKTRA
10	5 CHILDREN AND IT

sm city bicutan

1	CONSTANTINE
2	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3	DREAMBOY
4	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

sm cinema tutuban

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat

1	ELEKTRA
2	CONSTANTINE
3	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4	DREAMBOY

LUZON

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1	CONSTANTINE
2	SHALL WE DANCE
3	DREAMBOY
4	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5	WITHOUT A PADDLE
6	LET THE LOVE BEGIN

sm city baguio

1	SHALL WE DANCE
2	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3	DREAMBOY
4	CONSTANTINE

sm city batangas

1	CONSTANTINE
2	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3	DREAMBOY
4	MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city dasmariñas

1	CONSTANTINE
2	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3	DREAMBOY
4	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13

sm city marilao

1	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2	DREAMBOY
3	SHALL WE DANCE
4	MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city bacoor

1	ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13
2	ELEKTRA
3	CONSTANTINE
4	DREAMBOY
5	FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
6	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
7	SALSA smcinemaexclusive
8	5 CHILDREN AND IT

sm city lucena

1	SHALL WE DANCE
2	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
3	A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT
4	DREAMBOY

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu

1	LIFE & LOVE IN THE TIME OF BORLOLOY (CHOIR CONCERT)
2	ELEKTRA
3	MEET THE FOCKERS
4	CONSTANTINE
5	DREAMBOY
6	WITHOUT A PADDLE
7	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
8	CONSTANTINE

sm city iloilo

1	DREAMBOY
2	RESERVED
3	SALSA smcinemaexclusive
4	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
5	CONSTANTINE
6	SHALL WE DANCE
7	RESERVED
8	MEET THE FOCKERS

sm city davao

1	CONSTANTINE
2	SHALL WE DANCE
3	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4	MEET THE FOCKERS
5	DREAMBOY
6	CONSTANTINE

sm city cagayan de oro

1	CONSTANTINE
2	DREAMBOY
3	LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4	SHALL WE DANCE

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R	S	L	E	Q	K	S	E	R	N
T	A	L	L	T	K	I	N	D	T
T	H	O	U	G	H	T	F	U	L
L	U	V	G	A	Y	I	C	H	E
T	O	U	G	H	M	V	U	O	M
G	O	U	N	I	V	E	T	P	A
H	A	N	D	S	O	M	E	E	N

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Promo period: February 9 to 18, 2005
Raffle Draw is on March 1, 2005
See posters for details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0390, Series of 2005

Coming after 'The Matrix' and other copycats, 'Constantine' looks dated and seems too eager to please. But Keanu is intensely watchable

Comic-book hero canonized

From page A3-1

Constantine races against time to beat the hell out of the devil.

Frank Lawrence, the director, milks the story of every bit of show and flash. The result is your roller coaster entertainment straight out of Industrial Magic and the hi-tech gloss-and-floss complex. If this movie had been shown five years ago, it would have at least merited a citation for visual gimmickry and innovation. But coming after "The Matrix" and other copycats and pretenders, it looks dated and a bit overwrought. It seems to meet the fate of "Van Helsing," last year's supernatural high-tech thriller that "Constantine" closely resembles. It seems too eager to please and thus, too wobbly and insecure.

If it works ...

Movies that come after such hi-tech achievements as "Star Wars" and "Matrix" only prove the Mcluhanism, "If it works, it's obsolete." Look at "The Phantom Menace," the "Star Wars" prequel whose last installment will be showing soon: It's been one sure downslide since the first installment, and George Lucas has been looking like an even bigger loser than Francis Ford Coppola, post- "Godfather III."

Which is not to say "Constantine" doesn't work. Miracle of miracles, it works because of two things: Keanu Reeves and theology. The latter provides an intriguing dimension to the movie—mythology and iconography.

Like another comic-book character, the Daredevil, Constantine is burdened with the consciousness of sin and evil. While the former is propelled by the desire for vengeance, the latter is impelled by the eschatological need to do penance and ensure one's salvation since he has been to hell and back, and it's not exactly an inviting place.

The iconography, of course, is there as a matter of exoticism. Indeed, the comic book writers themselves (the original material is called "Hellblazer") aren't exactly devout Catholics; they just put the staple Catholic imagery there as a complement to the bizarre demonology.

Buddha of cool

That they did so testifies to the power of pre-Vatican II religiosity and to the stupidity of Vatican II in discarding all the icons of one's traditional Catholic childhood that made hell so cringingly real and heaven so concrete. If the historical Constantine saw the cross and conquered, the comic book Constantine conjures the crossfire between heaven and hell.

The fire-and-brimstone theology is buttressed by the acting of Keanu Reeves, icon of cool. Reeves hardly shows new depths in his characterization — just as, in "Little Buddha," he didn't exactly lead us to nirvana. But his acting here surprisingly works because he hams it up without meaning to.

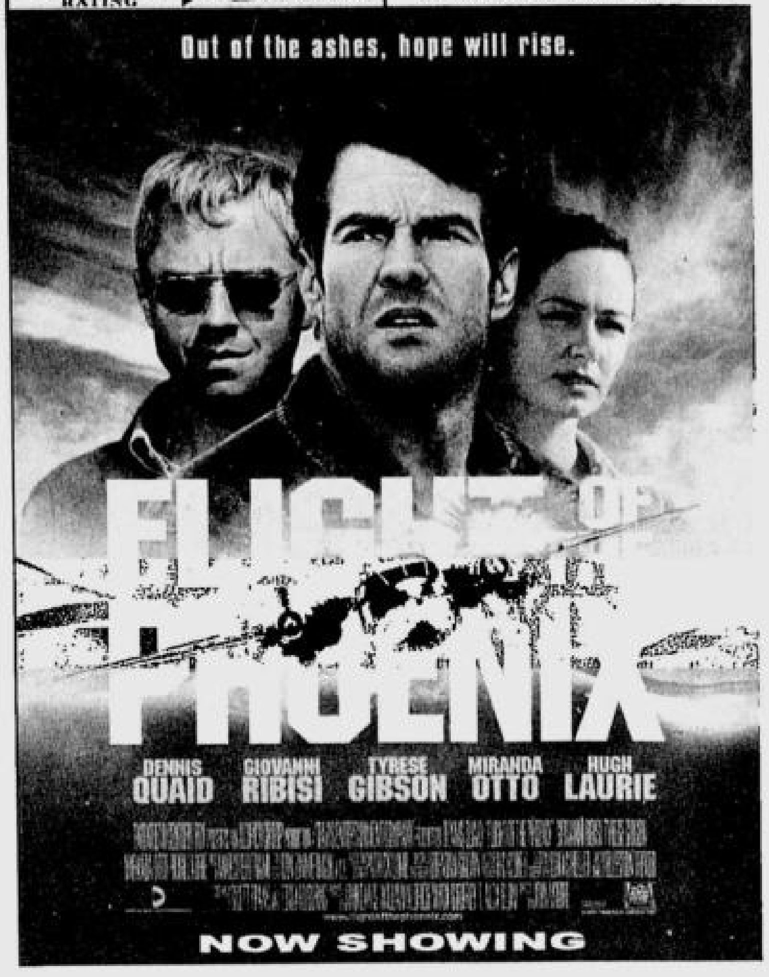
When he tries to reveal the torment of his soul, he coughs up a laugh and it sounds like he's asphyxiated himself for munching too much mint; and when he's reminded that he committed the unspeakable crime of suicide, he smarts as if the load of plenary indulgences he has shored up is not enough to save him from the fires of hell. But he makes hell seem cool.

It helps that he has the right action-star physique—tall, willowy and graceful—and his face is comic-book friendly, without much emotion but graphically beautiful.

It helps, too, that Reeves had previously played characters that somehow mixed and matched with his role as Constantine: the dashing, ethically correct young lawyer who kills himself rather than provide the seed that would spawn the anti-Christ in "The Devil's Advocate," and Neo the cyber messiah in the "Matrix" series.

It seems that Reeves has been fated to play all of these metaphysical characters even if his acting doesn't exactly scale metaphysical heights. Never mind. He's intensely watchable and graceful, come hell or high water.

MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL PATRONAGE | ALL AUDIENCES ADMITTED



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③ THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
MTRCB: (PG - 13)

② SIDEWAYS
MTRCB: (R - 18)
11:45, 2:20,4:55, 7:30, 10:05 LMF

④ R A Y
MTRCB: (PG - 13)
12:30, 3:35, 6:40, 9:45 LMF

PREMIERE THEATRE CONSTANTINE
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Shangri-La Plaza

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3 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINATIONS
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2ND WEEK
Andrew Lloyd Webber's classic tale of terror, mystery and romance, seen by over 8 million people worldwide, comes to the big screen for the first time.
The PHANTOM of the OPERA

5 minutes or a date with Angel Locsin

From page A3-1

never do those nasty things that people say he did. I'm here for him... because he's my friend.

(Angel is one of the five dream girls in Axe's "Choose the Girl, Spend Her Money" promo. Win P500,000 worth of shopping money and a date with Angel, Rachel Piazza, Ayanna Oliva, Bubbles Paraiso and Paula McCormac. Log on to www.axe.com.ph or text AXE REG <GIRL'S NAME>/<CODE>/<NAME>/<CITY>/<GENDER>/<AGE> to 2955)

ANNAPOLIS XPERIMENT recently signed up with Viva Records. The band members are Donn Panlilio, vocalist/keyboardist; Steven Ditching, rhythm guitarist/vocalist; Justin Cuyugan, drummer; Tzee del Rosario, bass guitarist, and Nonie Martinez, lead guitarist. The band performs at Ratsky on J. Bocobo Street, Malate.

Sweet song for Aubrey

IT'S a busy month for Troy Montero, certainly the best-looking artist on the roster of Ivory Music & Video. Weekends he does mall tours to promote his debut LP, "Special Memory."

The title track was composed in the mid-'80s and first sung by Iwi Laurel. Troy says he immediately fell in love with the poignant ballad.

"Special Memory" consists of 12 cuts, mostly remakes of hits from the '70s and '80s.

"All My Life," "I Don't Want You To Go," "If You Leave Me Now," "Never Surrender," "My Eyes Adored You," "Anything For You," "You Take My Breath Away" and "Time After Time."

Troy dedicates "You Take My Breath Away" to his mom, "my Number One fan." It is his parents' theme song, he says. "You should see how tightly she hugged me when she found out I was recording her favorite. It describes how much my dad means to my mom."

The only one

"All My Life" is dedicated to Aubrey Miles, "my sweetness."

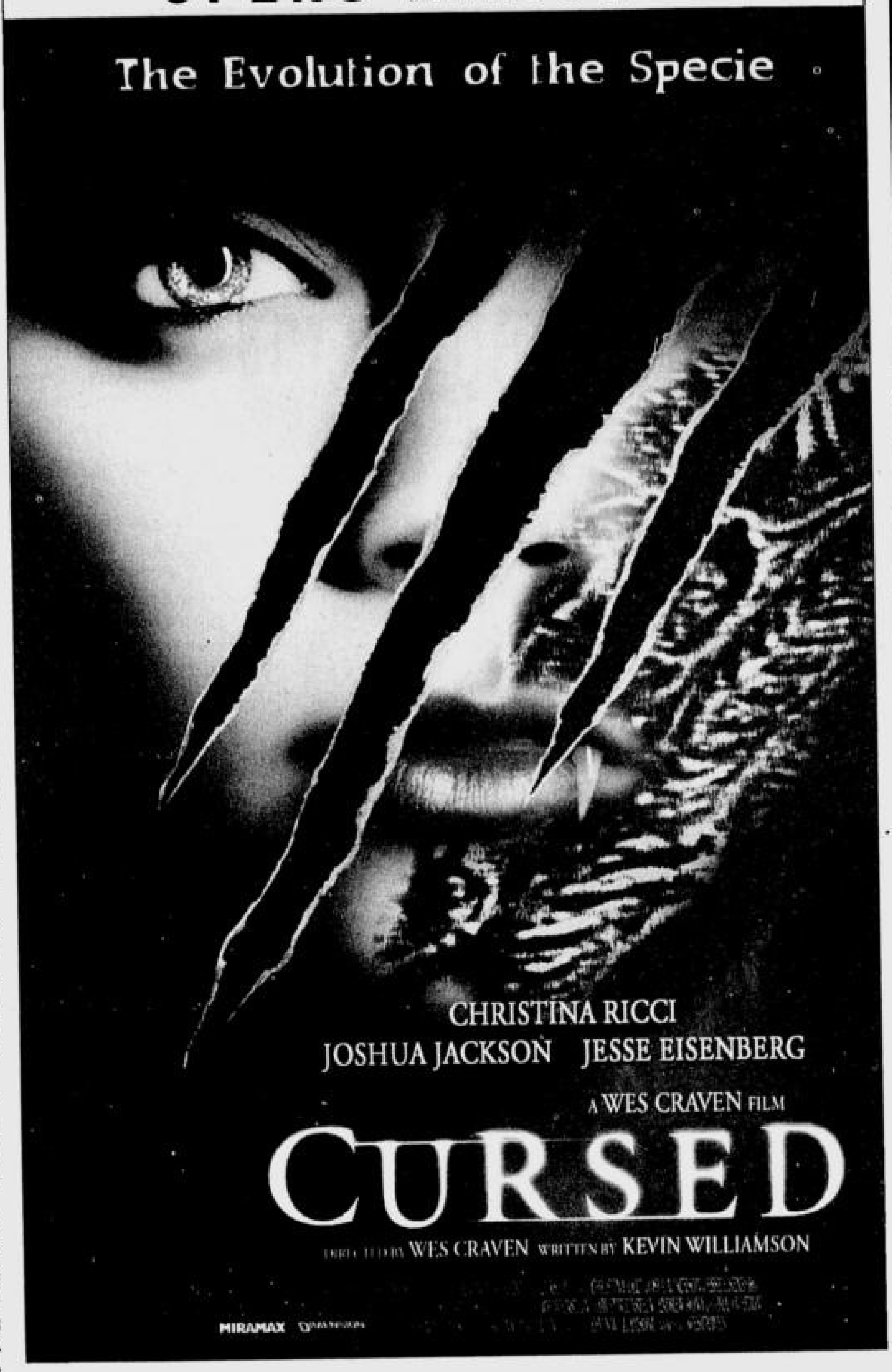
The only one

Among the girls who have been linked to him, Troy says, Aubrey—who is almost half his age—is the only one he has cared this much about.

"She is sweet and caring and we have this passion for shopping. She spoils me a lot. Twice, I brought her to the States and my parents liked her instantly. I couldn't think of any other song that would best express my love for Aubrey except 'All My Life.' She is the answer to my prayers. We have created so many special memories." *Remy Umerez*

TROY Montero

OPENS MARCH 2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Araneta Center
Entertainment Guide

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SIDEWAYS 12:45 / 3:30 / 6:15 / 9:00
RAY - LIFE STORY OF RAY CHARLES 12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
5 CHILDREN & IT 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35
MEET THE FOCKERS 12:00 / 2:15 / 4:30 / 6:45 / 9:00
LET THE LOVE BEGIN 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
DREAM BOY 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30
SHALL WE DANCE 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT 6:50 / 9:30

ALI MALL CINEMAS

❶ LET THE LOVE BEGIN 11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20
❷ CONSTANTINE 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20
❸ PHANTOM OF THE OPERA 11:50 / 2:40 / 5:30 / 8:20
❹ FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX 12:05 / 2:10 / 4:15 / 6:20 / 8:25
❺ DREAM BOY 11:00 / 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20

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ARANETA COLISEUM	*Fire Dance Spectacular February 22 to 27* *Jars of Clay: Show You Love March 2*
GATEWAY MALL	performance by *Mishka Adams February 25* *Rustan's Department Store Lifestyle & Home Exhibit extended up to February 20*
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MOVIE GUIDE
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1 (DOLBY) CONSTANTINE PG13
2 (DOLBY) SIDEWAYS R18
3 (DOLBY) PHANTOM OF THE OPERA PG13
4 (DOLBY) RAY PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) CONSTANTINE PG13

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
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1 CONSTANTINE
2 SOON TO OPEN
3 SOON TO OPEN
4 LET THE LOVE BEGIN

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
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Masagana CINEMA
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1 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
2 CONSTANTINE
3 DREAMBOY

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2 RESERVED
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) CONSTANTINE
5 SARANGGANI

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1 FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX
2 SARANGANI
3 LET THE LOVE BEGIN
4 DREAMBOY
5 (DOLBY) CONSTANTINE
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MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

This is unflinching reality

HANY ABU-ASSAD, director: Not much acting needed

BERLIN—A portrayal of Palestinian suicide bombers as complex and conflicted people driven to their deadly deed by the Israeli occupation premiered in an unflinching film Monday at the Berlinale.

"Paradise Now," shot almost entirely in Nablus in the occupied West Bank, follows the two longtime friends, Kais Nashef as Said and Ali Suliman as Khaled, as they prepare and set out for their attack in Tel Aviv.

But gradually, the young men change their minds.

"They are human, whether you like it or not, even the suicide bombers are human," Palestinian-born director Hany Abu-Assad told AFP in an interview.

The Berlin audience warmly applauded the controversial movie, screening in competition at the festival for the Golden and Silver Bear awards.

"This is reality, this is what life is like under occupation. We didn't need to do much acting," Ashraf Barhoum, chilling as Abu-Karem, the mastermind behind the planned attack on Israeli soldiers, told a news conference through a translator.

Abu-Assad said he intentionally chose Nablus, picking mostly actors from there. Often, the crew had to interrupt work because of shooting or even missile attacks.

"The concept of the film was to make fiction in a 100 percent reality," he said. "To shoot in the place while it's happening ... this is why it looked so authentic."

Must-see in Israel

The director is keen to see the movie shown in Middle Eastern theaters, particularly in Israel.

"I think it's very important that the Israelis see it," he told reporters, stressing that he by no means condones suicide attacks. "They have to see it because it is part of their narrative, part of their tragedy."

The movie includes the filming of the traditional video in which the would-be "martyrs" explain why they are sacrificing themselves in the armed struggle against occupation, and a scene in which the men are wired up as human bombs.

Barhoum said everyone felt the film hit very close to home.

"People were crying when Khaled was reading his last will and testament" to the video camera, he said.

The would-be attack is thwarted when a military patrol arrives after the two slip through a cut fence between the West Bank and Israel. Only Khaled returns to the base, while Said, explosives still strapped to his chest, disappears.

But humor also figures in what would appear to be a very heavy tale—the video camera breaks down twice as Khaled is reciting his suicide manifesto, and when it finally works he looks up to see several people chewing on pita bread on the other side of the camera.

The 55th Berlinale, second only to Cannes on the global film festival circuit, runs through Sunday. *AFP*

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② Flight of the Phoenix
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Flowers on Film & Canvass at the Activity Center

February 28 - March 2
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2:00 pm-4:00 pm, Food Choices
Lectures and seminars by various flower clubs
2:00 pm-4:00 pm, Activity Center

Baguio City Panagbenga Flower Festival
See the winning dance group from Baguio live!
Mar. 3, Thursday, 12nn, 3pm, 6pm
Mar. 4, Friday, 1pm, 4pm, 6pm
Mar. 5, Saturday, 1pm, 4pm, 6pm
Activity Center

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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Masked Rider Ryuki		Gatekeepers	TV Patrol		Spirits	Krystala	'Til Death Do Us Part	Hiram	Save The Last Dance	Search For A Star In A Million			Insider
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyaryo	Value Vision		GSIS Member's Hour		Network Forum		Teledyaryo		9th Tinig Awards				Ugnayang Pambansa	
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA		PBA		Sentro	PBA					Big News	TNA Impact		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7		Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Joyride	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Knock Out	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin		Starstruck	Stairway To Heaven	Bubble Gang			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Just For Laughs	Enterprise		Monk		Dead Zone		Newswatch Now	Adboard Golf		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Lifestyle		Chowtime Na!		V League				Pulis Na Palaban	IBC News Tonite	GMA The Working President	
Solar		WWE Velocity		Thunder Box		Rascal	Ozzy & Drix	Mucha Lucha!	Avengers	Stargate SG1		WWE Smackdown				WWE Velocity		Wow	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	1, 2, 3	Nick Mix						Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX		Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Star MYX	Club MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		What I Like About You	JKX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	Simple Life	Iron Chef		Fame		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Eliminidate	Change of Heart
Cinema One		Cool Dudes				Mano Po				Hostage			Review Night	Alfredo Lim: Batas ng Maynila				Pilita & Carmen Live At MGM	
Studio 23				Jimmy Neutron, Boy Genius			Justice League	Wazzup Wazzup	Spider-Man: The Animated Series			Playing It Straight		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Yes Dear		
AXN		Nuremberg				Now See This (Season II)	Now See This (Season II)	Samurai X	Samurai X	Beastmaster III		The Right Stuff II	Rated X	Cold Squad		Invincible			
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	TNA Wrestling		Totally Outrageous Behavior Caught On Tape	Weird TV	Really Caught In The Act		Friends	Totally Outrageous Behavior Caught On Tape
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News		World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic				Secret China		Taboo		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat Geographic Specials		NG Sex		Journey Of Man	
Solar Sports		IBF Korea Open '05			Sounds of the Finals	Basketballography: M. Jordan	NBA TV Daily	NBA Fan Favorite '05 lod				In This Corner		NBA Game: Cleveland @ Minnesota					GWS ep.7-2005
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Molto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Ming's Quest	Revealed With Jules Asner		New York Nick	Lifestyle		Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	Back To Basics	Annie Hall	
HBO	Jade (2:40 PM)			Hey Arnold! The Movie (4:15 PM)			One True Thing				Malibu's Most Wanted			Red Dragon				Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines	
Star Movies			Road To Perdition				Home Alone				Barb Wire (7:20 PM)			Face/Off				Con Air (11:15PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	Codename Kids Next Door	Hi Hi Puffy Ami Yumi	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Shaman King	The Looney Tunes Show		The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Courage The Cowardly Dog	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Megas XLR	Aqua Teen (11:15PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN				Atlantic Coast Conf. Duke vs. Virginia Tech				Goal!	Premier Snooker League '04 Cardiff Wales				Atlantic Coast Conf. Virginia vs. Nth Carolina				Sportscenter Taiwan	Soccer FIFA Fever	Sportscenter Asia
Disney Channel	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Unstalkative Bunny	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean: The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch/Unstalkative Bunny	The Aristocats			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Sabrina: The Teenage Witch, Friends Forever	
Cinemax				Cops And Robbersons			Empire Of The Sun					The Dukes Of Hazzard Reunion!			American Pie The Wedding			Lightning Bolts Of Destruction (11:10PM)	
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Loves Enduring Promise				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		She's Too Young			Child Of Our Time (10:35PM)		Judging Amy (11:25PM)
Discovery Channel		Power Zone				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Junkyard Wars		American Chopper		Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Crime Night	
MTV Philippines		Whatever Things	Hangin Out at MTV	Non-Stop Hits	MTV Most Wanted		MTV Classic (Vol 2)		055 MAA Power with Style	MTV Diyos		Newlyweds	Be Seen @ MTV	Faking the Video	Laguna Beach	Be Seen @ MTV	MTV Screen	VH1 Video Collections	
Sports Plus	Porsche md 9&10	Italian Serie A (delayed)				Nascar Gatorade 150's Daytona Int'l Speedway						World Poker Tour ep 6 Connecticut				Inside the PGA	At&t Pebble Beach Nat'l Pro-Am Highlights		Nissan Open Day1
EWTN	Does The Church Still Teach That	Angelus (3:15PM)	Stations Of The Cross	Image Of God	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Search And Rescue	Your Call	EWTN Gallery	Life on The Rock Encore		Gospel Of Life In Health Care	Defending Life	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	Backstage	Father Corapi And The Catechism Of The Catholic Church	

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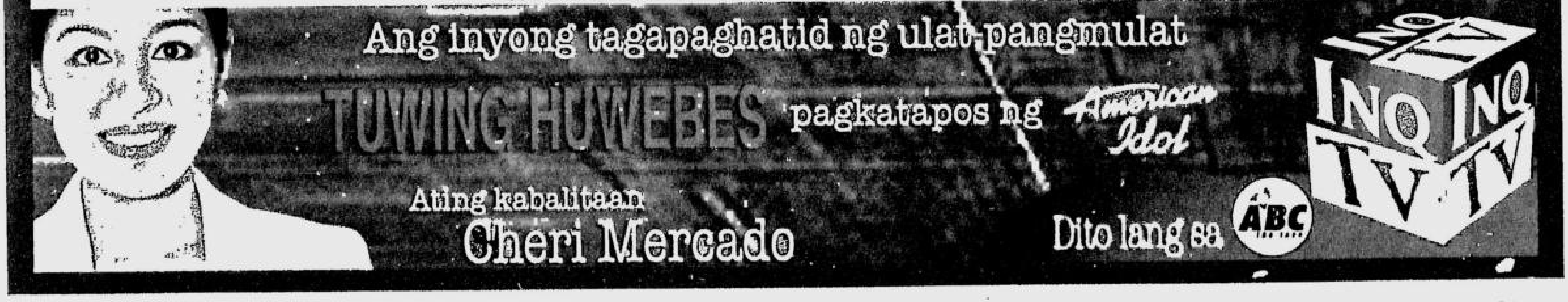

Ang inyong tagapaghatid ng ulat-pangmulat
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Ayala group '04 profit soars 130%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA Corp., the largest conglomerate in the country, yesterday said its 2004 net income soared 130 percent to P7.1 billion from P3.1 billion in 2003, on the back of the strong financial performance posted by its core businesses.

Its income level was also boosted by earnings from the sale of portion of its holdings in telecommunication subsidiary Globe Telecom Inc.

The P7.1-billion profit was higher than market estimates placed at P5.53 billion.

The company said in a statement that its core businesses such as property development, banking and telecommunications, as well as the companies under AC Capital, contributed a total of P10.2 billion in earnings, 31 percent higher than the previous year.

In the same statement, Ayala Corp. said it gained P2.6 billion from the sale of a portion of its Globe common shares late last year. Without this one-time gain, profit would still be up by a hefty 44 percent.

Ayala owns two-thirds of the country's biggest property firm, Ayala Land Inc., more than a third of second-biggest lender Bank of the Philippine Islands and 35 percent of No. 2 phone firm Globe Telecom. It also has interests in electronics, car dealerships, water distribution and the Burger King franchise in the Philippines.

"We are certainly encouraged by the robust performance of our core businesses, as well as the significant growth in contribution of AC Capital to the entire group," said Ayala president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II.

"We are optimistic about the emergent positive trends within the industries where we operate and feel we are well-positioned for growth moving forward. This year's performance is also reflective of our continuing drive to identify opportunities where we can unlock values in our investments and better position ourselves for growth-oriented investment cycles. We are particularly pleased that investors have showed confidence in the fundamentals of our group's businesses and in our plans for the future," he added.

ALI said its net income grew 11 percent to P3 billion in 2004, with revenue up 24 percent to P18 billion led by buoyant sales across all product lines. Rental revenue, particularly from retail operations, grew 10 percent to P3.9 billion

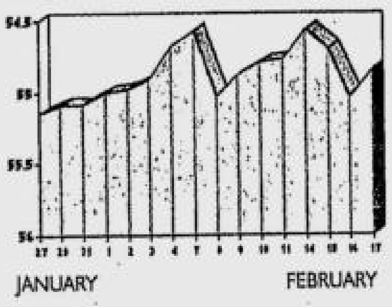
The group's banking arm, Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), posted a net income of P6.7 billion, 17 percent higher than the previous year. Net interest income grew 17 per-

AYALA/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 54.85 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2005

¥ 105.26 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2005

GOLD: $ 425.00-425.50
per ounce Hong Kong, Feb. 16, 2005

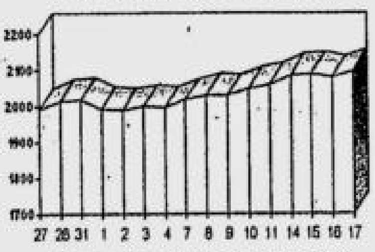
STOCK MARKET

Shares end at 5-yr high

SHARES yesterday closed at a five-year high, as investors set aside concerns over Moody's steep credit rating downgrade the previous day and focused on favored stocks.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 18.51 points, or 1 percent, at 2,096.99, its best finish since Jan. 17, 2000, when it closed at 2,097.23.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

The index lost 0.6 percent Wednesday after Moody's downgraded the Philippines' credit rating by a worse-than-expected two notches.

Government officials, fund managers and analysts agreed that the rating action was harsh.

"Both here and abroad, many felt that the downgrade was excessive," said PCCI Securities president Francisco Liboro, noting that Moody's justification for its downgrade was based on the country's fiscal condition as far back as the middle of last year. Many reforms have been put in place since then.

Blue-chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s American Depositary Receipts in New York managed to slow a steep drop to close just 0.1 percent down Wednesday.

Moving forward, analysts are even banking on a credit upgrade once the government is able to put in place more fiscal reforms, traders said. *AP*

BIR tightens watch on bank borrowers

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has issued an order requiring banks and other financial institutions to lend only to tax compliant borrowers.

Revenue Regulation No. 4-2005, signed by newly-appointed Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima the other day, provides the guidelines for and complements a circular recently issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on the responsibility of banks to ensure that they will provide services only to tax compliant borrowers.

BSP Circular No. 472 directs banks and other financial institutions to ask for additional requirements before approving a loan application. These additional requirements are: income tax returns (ITRs) of the borrower, the co-maker, endorser, surety and/or guarantor duly stamped by the BIR; copy of the borrower's latest financial statement submitted to the BIR if the borrower is engaged in business, and a waiver of confidentiality of client information or letter of authority allowing the bank to verify with the BIR the authenticity of the ITRs and financial statement.

The BSP earlier said the circular was intended to help the fiscally troubled government address tax delinquency and therefore improve revenue collection.

The Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares earlier said the BSP circular and the recently issued BIR regulation would boost the government's campaign

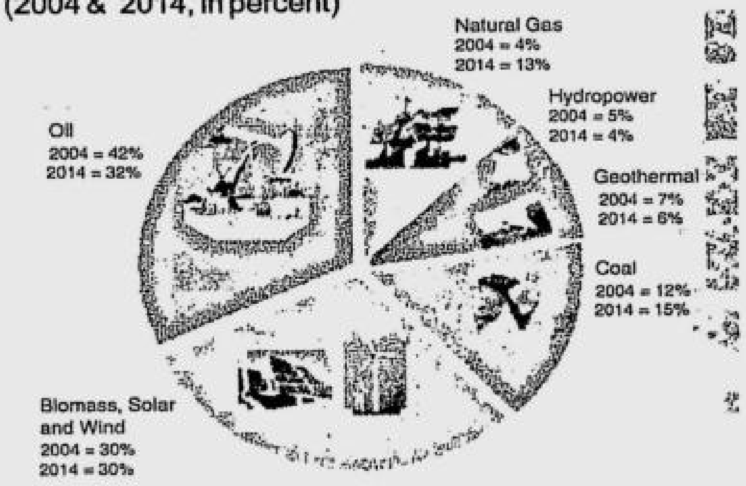
BIR/B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Energy supply mix

(2004 & 2014, in percent)



Source: Department of Energy

THE COUNTRY aims to be 60 percent energy self-sufficient by 2010 so government will embark on a more intensive promotion of oil and gas exploration to raise reserves by 20 percent in 10 years. There is also a need to identify more coal sites and increase productivity of mines to reduce coal imports by 20 percent.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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PNCC seeks ₱500M in loan for retirement of NLEX employees

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE National Construction Corp. is seeking P500 million in loan from the Government Service Insurance System for a retirement program that will cover about 1,000 employees who used to work with North Luzon Expressway (NLEX).

PNCC chair Pastor Ramos said the agency had to retire the NLEX employees after the Lopez-controlled Manila North Tollways Corp. took over the operations of the north Luzon highway last Feb. 10.

The consortium has a contract to rehabilitate and operate the NLEX until 2030. It committed to pay P150 million for the retirement of the affected employees. However, MNTC has so far turned over to PNCC only P15 million.

Ramos said his office was also pressing MNTC to turnover the balance of P135 million this month.

The upgrading and rehabilitation of NLEX cost the consortium $371 million, which was financed through a combination of equity infusion and borrowings.

By 2030, MNTC would turn over the highway to the government.

MNTC is a joint venture between PNCC and Lopez-owned First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp.

MNTC is now charging a flat fee of P42 for cars and jeeps, P106 for buses and light trucks and P127 on heavy trucks and trailers traveling the 14-kilometer stretch classified as open highway from Balintawak to Bocaue in Bulacan.

Along the 70-kilometer closed system from Bocaue to Sta. Ines in Pampanga, class 1 motorists have to pay P2.49 per km, class 2 vehicles with P6.23 per km. and class 3 vehicles with P7.47 per km.

Cars or jeeps traveling the entire stretch from Balintawak to Sta. Ines would have to pay about P145. Buses and light trucks would shell out about P500 and heavy trucks and trailers or Class 3 would be charged about P600.

More than 150,000 motorists use the NLEX daily.

MNTC president Jose De Jesus said the next toll rate adjustment would be in 2007. He said toll rates could even drop if the foreign exchange and inflation rates would improve.

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RP call center sector seen to top India's

By Ronnel W. Domingo

REVENUES from local call center operations are expected to triple to $3.6 billion in five years as the country is expected to overtake India's global lead in this sector, industry analysts said yesterday during the opening of the e-Services Philippines 2005.

The trade show, which runs until today at the Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, was organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions. It gathered some 10,000 local and foreign visitors.

Cesar Tolentino, a senior analyst at consultancy firm XMG Asia Pacific, said local call centers would top by 2005 their Indian counterparts' projected earnings of between $3.3 billion and $3.4 billion.

"This is the trend that we see considering that 'locally, aggregate call center revenue grew by 300 percent over the last three years," Tolentino said.

Eugene Talasch, an Australia-based principal analyst at XMG, said the Philippines could take the lead especially if it boosted its attractiveness as an outsourcing location.

For this to happen Talasch said the country must improve telecommunications and other basic infrastructure.

"Currently, the Philippines is below the median as a location," he said. "But it is (in a relatively high position) in terms of resources—the quality of resources, the type of skills of the labor force, the cost of operations and English-language proficiency."

Talasch added that inflow of investments in information technology-enabled services could reach P20 billion in four to five years, with call centers being the key to this growth. In 2004, IT investments reached P8.07 billion or a 49.4-percent growth from P5.4 billion in 2003.

Talasch said the country needed to make the global market more aware of the "excellent education system (here), your excellent language skills, your good track record, and the specific skills you excel in."

However, he said the country should work on the local industry's weaknesses, especially on government incentives and support, and international promotion or marketing.

Still, Damian Domingo O. Mapa of the Commission on Information and Communications Techology said that while the country was indeed expected to take the lead in call centers, India was still the leader in IT services.

Ayala group '04 . . . .

From page B1

cent, boosted by a 39-basis point expansion in net interest margin.

Globe Telecom, for its part, posted a 9 percent growth in net income in 2004 to P11.3 billion on net service revenues of P52.7 billion, up 11 percent from year-ago level. The company's growth momentum was sustained with the net addition of 3.7 million new wireless subscribers during the year, bringing total wireless subscribers to 12.5 million by the end of the year or 41 percent higher than 2003 level.

Companies under the AC Capital portfolio--Manila Water Co., Integrated Microelectronics Inc., Ayala Automotive and Ayala International--continued to show significant improvements in their financial performance contributing to the group P2.3 billion in net earnings, or 2.2 times higher than last year.

Manila Water posted record net income of P1.3 billion, 16 percent higher than the previous year, on a revenue of P4.2 billion. Net income attributable to Ayala Auto reached P183 million, despite the industry-wide slowdown. *With a report from Reuters*

BIR tightens watch . . .

From page B1

against tax evaders and help increase its tax collection starting this year.

According to the revenue regulation, loan applicants are advised to file their ITRs and financial statements with the BIR using the revenue agency's Electronic Filing and Payment System (EFPS).

The revenue regulation said banks should check the authenticity of the ITRs and financial statements that were submitted electronically either through inquiring with the BIR's contact center, or with its online portal. To check on the authenticity of ITRs and financial statements submitted manually, the financial institution should submit through fax the copy of the documents to the BIR's contact center together with a cover request.

The BIR, which accounts for over 60 percent of the national government's revenue collection, is tasked to collect P546 billion this year, compared with its P470-billion collection in 2004.

Aside from the tax measures being pushed in the legislature, the BIR is banking on several administrative measures to improve its tax collection. These include tie-ups with other government agencies as to provide third-party data relevant to the BIR's tax auditing function, and the upgrading of its auditing technology.

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2005-028	Two (2) Years Lease Rental of thirty three (33) units Brand New Copier Machine for LBP-HO Units with estimated minimum volume of 5,000 copies/unit/month.	P 3,265,920.00	LBP Funds
2005-038	3,960 pads Application for Manager's Checks, Demand Drafts, Electronic Money Transfers, Traveller's Checks and Gift Checks	P 2,970,000.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on March 9, 2005 at 1:00 p.m. and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000 00 for each ITB

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All particulars relative to the Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

Lucio Tan plays snake charmer

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

IT WAS supposed to have been only Michael Tan, Lucio Tan's eldest son by his second wife, who had been scheduled to meet with the INQUIRER Business staff, but for still unknown reasons, the taipan himself decided that he too would go, bringing with him his brother Harry and a number of the taipan's key lieutenants.

It was a pleasant surprise, considering that the taipan and the INQUIRER have had difficult relations in the past; still, gracious hosts that they were, INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez even upgraded the modest Business staff lunch budget to Le Souffle catering for the Wednesday visit.

And in deference to the guest, pancit bihon was thrown in as one of the courses, with INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto even making a last-minute check that no San Miguel drink would ever get served.

The taipan's '80s-era Mercedes Benz S pulled up by the INQUIRER's Chino Roces entrance, followed by an Expedition, half an hour late. The Benz sported diplomatic plates, apparently one of the benefits of the taipan being an honorary consul of Romania.

During the welcome pleasantries, the media-shy zillionaire readily handed out his bond paper-thin calling cards and took care to match the face with the name on each of the card that he likewise received, occasionally writing notes on the received cards.

For one who does not even bother to answer even the most unpleasant media attacks, Tan amazed the INQUIRER staff when he distinguished the one-star, two-star and even three-star editions of the daily. And for one whose every minute of his working hours costs millions, the taipan even bothered to take down notes on INQUIRER minutiae, such as where the provincial printing presses are located and the number of dailies in the INQUIRER stable.

Atypical for one who has made his pile through the medically challenged nicotine-delivery business, the Fortune Tobacco tycoon expressed concern over the dwindling ozone layer, rolling up his left sleeve to emphasize the increased radiation effects, accidentally exposing an Erap-like wrist band beneath a Rolex-like stainless steel wrist watch.

Despite the give-and-take exchange, Tan—partly true to form, partly because of linguistic differences—remained tightly coiled, even when the Prietos left the visitor after the first course to the tender mercies of the young, mainly female, reportorial staff.

The taipan remained unshaken, even managed a smile, when transport/telecom reporter Clarissa Batino, in her trademark confrontational tone, asked him what kind of legacy would he leave given the multi-billion-peso tax evasion still unresolved.

"But they have no evidence," was his short explanation.

He did let out that he and the Lorenzos were "very close" to arriving at a deal that would allow the taipan to take management control of the Singapore-listed Del Monte Pacific.

According to pro-Tan grapevine, the leading shareholders of Del Monte Pacific—the family of former Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr., Cirio of Italy and the Government of Singapore Investment Corp.—have a voting trust agreement that the taipan needs to acquire in order to take management control of the regional fruit and drinks conglomerate.

With the voting trust agreement secured, Tan need no longer purchase the entire 40 percent stake of the ailing Cirio food conglomerate since acquiring the block would trigger a costly tender offer for even the minority shareholders.

Tan joked that the reason he is always out of the country these days is that he is constantly meeting with financial institutions and seeking to borrow money, especially for the multi-billion-peso refleeting of Philippine Airlines.

Asked if he would bid for the combined government stake of San Miguel, which he tried to acquire late in the Ramos years when Eduardo Cojuangco was then fighting an uphill battle to take control of the country's largest food and beverage conglomerate, Tan smiled before blurting out a Chinese proverb, "A snake cannot swallow an elephant."

Heard through the grapevine

PRICESMART, whose Philippine operations continue to bleed heavily, has decided to close shop in Mexico, with all its three money-losing warehouse stores simultaneously calling it quits by Feb. 28.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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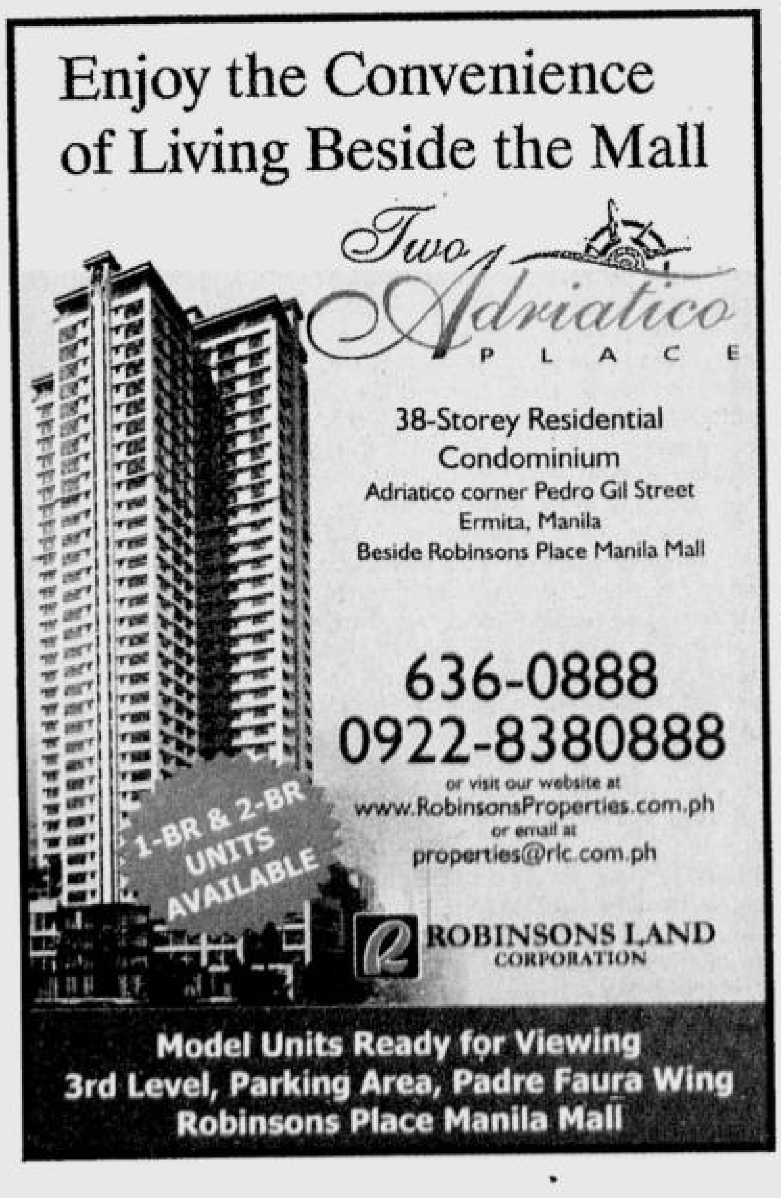
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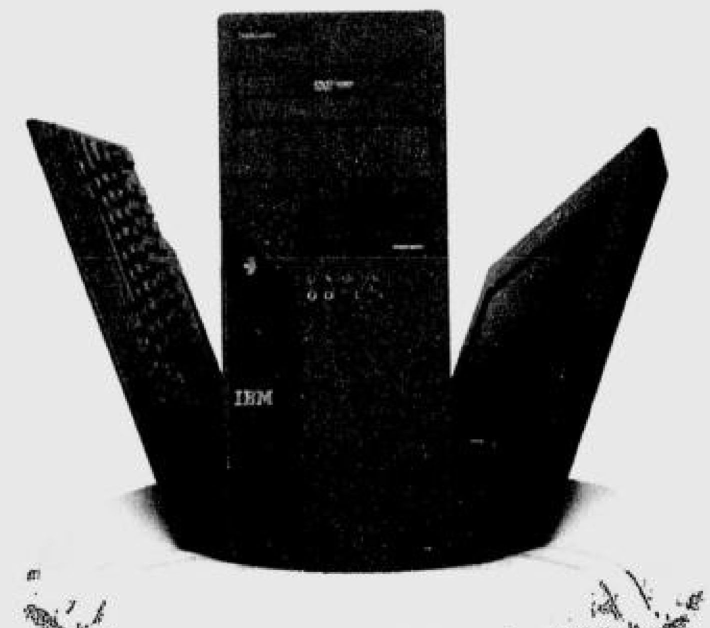

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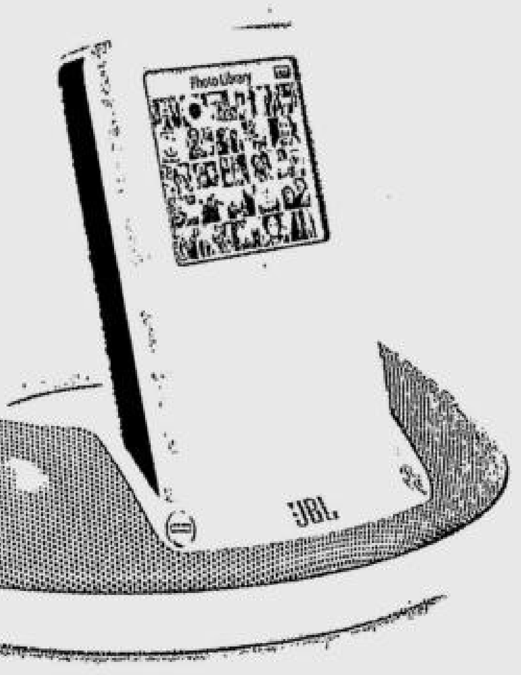

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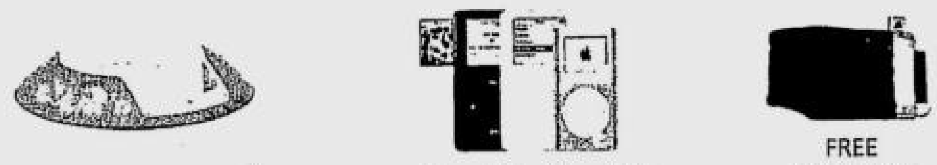

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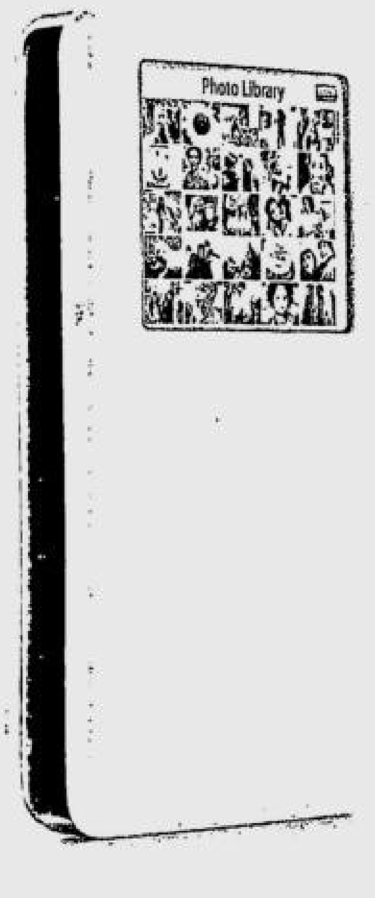

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CAP posted net loss of ₱3.81B in 2004

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PRE-NEED giant College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP), incurred a net loss of P3.81 billion in 2004, greater than the P2.74 billion of the previous year, according to the unaudited financial report it filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Bobby Café, CAP first vice president, said that when the SEC prevented CAP from selling securities in August last year, it caused their fixed costs to overtake their declining revenues.

The SEC last year suspended CAP's license to sell education plans for incurring a deficiency in its trust fund.

The increase in the amortization or yearly payments of its actuarial reserve liability (net liability to planholders) to P3.4 billion last year also bloated its losses.

Gross revenues from its trust fund, interest and realized gross income amounted to P957.6 million, declining from P1.33 billion in 2003.

Operating expenses, which included the ARL amortization, amounted to P4.4 billion, up from P3.395 billion the previous year.

The company said its 2004 deficit also increased to P8.73 billion from P4.9 billion in 2003.

Total assets declined to P17.08 billion as of December last year, from P18.5 billion in the same period in 2003.

Liabilities however grew to P26.28 billion from P23.93 billion with the increase in the company's ARL or net liabilities.

The company's trust fund, or its pool of funds managed by banks that is used to settle obligations to planholders, stood at P8.5 billion as of Dec. 31 last year. Total ARL stood at P13.24 billion from P11.9 billion in 2003.

To address its cash flow problem, CAP is planning to sell some of its trust fund assets to raise P500 to P700 million in funds. Officials plan to use the fund to pay the tuition fees of plan holders in March.

CAP was required to settle some P700 to P800 million worth of tuition fees. The total requirement for the second semester, from October to March, was estimated to reach P1.2 billion. Of the amount, CAP has already paid some P454 million.

Café said the company was in talks with possible investors for the sale of shares in Fil-Estate Management Inc. and System Technology Inc. certificates worth P1 billion. He did not identify the other assets to be sold but hinted that these might include pieces of property.

Based on CAP's 2003 financial statement, its trust fund, now worth P8.8 billion, has real estate investments worth P2.7 billion, shares of stock worth P2.26 billion and MRT bonds worth roughly P3 billion. Café said the company was continuing its negotiations with the Roxas Group despite a Department of Environment and Natural Resources pronouncement that it was slapping an illegal logging case against the Roxas-led companies.

Café said Romeo Roxas, president of Green Square Properties and Green Circle Properties and Resources, had offered pieces of property worth P6 billion to be transferred to CAP in exchange for shares in the pre-need company.

Roxas would subscribe to CAP shares worth P6 billion and pay for them by allotting parcels of land in Baler town in the eastern province of Aurora near Dingalan Bay.

CAP is also in talks with a US special fund, First American Investments Llc., for a $300-million loan. The first tranche, or roughly $80 million, may be drawn in the next 40 days. CAP is negotiating to convert the loan into shares of the company in case of default.

Lessons from Bangsamoro youth leaders

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

AT ABOUT the time the bombs were exploding in the cities of Makati, General Santos, and Davao last Feb. 14, I was talking to some 40 youth participants of the ongoing Bangsamoro Successor Generation program.

The program, running from Jan. 27 to Feb. 28, is funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Gender Equity Fund.

The Bangsamoro youth leaders said that much of the violence could have been avoided.

The killings would not have happened if only the government and the private sector joined in understanding the issues and adopting a different approach to solving the problems. The same approach may be equally applied to agricultural development.

Understanding the issue

The youth leaders said that a requirement for solving a problem successfully is to first understand the problem from the affected people's point of view. This should be done instead of providing off-the-shelf standard solutions that have little to do with the real problem. They cited the framework provided by Archbishop Orlando Quevado of Cotobato.

Using the historical and political data from the book "Bangsamoro, A Nation Under Endless Tyranny" by Salah Jubair, Quevado said that efforts "to subjugate, assimilate, and integrate the Bangsamoro people into the mainstream body politic without regard to their historical and cultural makeup is an injustice to the Bangsamoro people's religious, cultural, and political identity."

After understanding the problem, the people in the private sector should join hands with the government in identifying and achieving common solutions to the problem. This is the principle behind the framework of Building Transformative Communities (BTC).

Building transformative communities

The traditional position of people's organizations/non government organizations (POs/NGOs) is not to "touch" politics or governance because it is "dirty." They do not want to be caught engaging in it lest they be accused of politicking and using their organizations for their own vested interests. This position has precisely resulted in governance being left in the hands of traditional and transactional politicians.

On the other hand, the BTC framework encourages POs/NGOs to band together and lead the community in participating and even "owning" governance as a matter of "right." This is because government exists to serve the community. The use of the rights-based approach advances broad and meaningful participation in governance.

The problem in the past is that governance has often been left to a small group that uses it to serve its own selfish ends. In the electoral process, they present their own agendas and ask people to vote for them. In the BTC concept, the people themselves formulate the agenda that benefits them, and then look for the candidates that can support their agenda.

Bangsamoro youth

The Bangsamoro youth leaders attributed much of the failure in the Muslim areas to the fact that government programs were not responsive to the actual needs of the Muslims. This is because the leaders, whether Muslim or Christian, used a "traditional" or "transactional" approach. Had they used the BTC approach, they could have turned discontent and violence into satisfaction and success.

The Bangsamoro Successor Generation Program, which the youth leaders are currently participating in, aims to prepare them to lead in this paradigm shift from unresponsive administration determined by a few to a responsive governance determined by the community.

They are being trained to mobilize the different sectors in the community, often represented by POs and NGOs, to identify the real problems and formulate the appropriate solutions.

As a matter of right, they will then jointly work with government in discussing and implementing them.

Last Feb. 14, there were no bombs that exploded in the agriculture areas. But violence of a more subtle and equally devastating kind was, and still is, occurring.

Examples are the scarcity of technology and agricultural support services given by government, unfair local and international trade arrangements, and outright as well as technical smuggling.

'Killing them softly'

All are depriving our farmers and fisherfolk of their livelihood, and are "killing them softly."

This is now being corrected.

The Alyansa Agrikultura, formed two years ago and composed of thirty nine national and local federations and organizations, is defining the agricultural problems as their members see it.

They have even formulated a common agri-fisheries agenda that they are asking government to implement. Just as the Bangsamoro youth are expecting the BTC approach to provide a better future for the Muslims, the Alyansa expects the same approach to provide a better future for agriculture.

To support the Alyansa's approach and other agriculture development activities for small farmers and fisherfolk, Agriwatch held a fund raising event last Feb. 14. The response from the different sectors was overwhelming.

We thank the event's sponsors, patrons, and friends. The sponsors included the Philippine Daily Inquirer, ABC 5, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Globe Telecom, Land Bank, San Miguel Corp., SM Shoemart and SMART.

The patrons were Agumill, Belco Marketing, Ford, Foremost Farms, the Magsaysay Group of Companies, Nestlé Philippines, RFM-Sunkist Juices and United Coconut Planters Bank.

The friends included the ABS-CBN Foundation, the Ayala Foundation, Dole Philippines, GMA Network, Meralco, Philamlife Insurance Co. and Universal Robina.

With such broad based support and goodwill, we are well on our way to building agricultural transformative communities and achieving meaningful agricultural development.

(The author is the chair of Agriwatch, a private sector initiative; former Cabinet secretary for Presidential Flagship Programs and Projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture, and Trade and Industry. For inquiries and suggestions, email agriwatchphil@yahoo.com or telefax 8516635.)

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 17, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	4.8	4.95	4.8	4.95	140,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	30	30	29	30	920,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	56.5	58.5	56.5	58.5	520,200
China Banking Corp.	595	600	595	600	2,430
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	50	50	49.5	49.5	28,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.77	0.87	0.77	0.87	29,460,000
International Exch. Bank	19.75	20.25	19.5	20.25	643,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38.5	39.5	38.5	39.5	4,497,400
Philippine National Bank	37	37	36	36	46,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	15	15	15	15	22,000
Security Bank Corp.	33	33	33	33	193,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	31	31	30.5	31	36,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.04	1.1	1.04	1.1	124,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.5	3.5	11,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	220	280	220	280	580
Manulife Financial Corp.	2510	2520	2500	2520	800
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	20,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	138	140	138	138	2,520
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1820	1820	1820	1820	390
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	17.5	18	17.5	17.5	50,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.7	1.66	1.68	7,417,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	935	935	930	930	42,180
Ipeople Inc.	4.85	5	4.85	4.85	292,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.04	0.042	0.04	0.041	22,400,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	100,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.22	2.36	2.22	2.36	27,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.65	3.75	3.6	3.65	4,729,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1425	1435	1405	1405	146,970
Ivantage Corp.	0.7	0.76	0.7	0.75	18,800,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	15,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	204,400
Manila Electric Co. B	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	1,075,500
Petron Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.7	3.85	784,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	105,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.64	1.7	1.64	1.64	1,335,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	150,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.3	7.9	7.3	7.9	4,017,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	135,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	800,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	60,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.25	4.85	4.15	4.2	31,392,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	3.5	4	3.5	4	12,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	615,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.9	43,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	37.5	37.5	37	37.5	240,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28	28.5	28	28	10,600
RFM Corp.	0.83	1.24	0.83	1.24	770,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	140,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	58	57	58	146,600
San Miguel Corp. B	80	81	80	81	200,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.32	880,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	489,900,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.014	72,000,000
Ayala Corp.	8.3	8.5	8.3	8.5	11,176,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.74	0.8	0.74	0.74	1,270,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.45	4.75	4.45	4.7	2,435,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.032	0.035	0.032	0.034	12,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.22	2.34	2.22	2.26	844,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.58	0.42	0.58	90,390,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	44,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	120,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	30,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	33,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	2,500
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.18	0.2	0.18	0.185	13,000,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.28	1.4	1.28	1.4	91,156,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.88	0.88	70,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	350,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.3	0.26	0.29	8,170,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.65	0.74	0.65	0.67	19,530,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.4	4.65	4.4	4.55	4,847,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.06	0.07	0.0575	0.0675	26,900,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.5	1.54	1.48	1.54	742,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.2	457,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	49.5	50.5	49.5	50.5	698,700
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.22	0.25	0.22	0.25	2,380,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.125	0.09	0.115	65,300,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.02	2.08	2	2	2,435,000
Ionics Inc.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	362,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.6	3.4	3.4	670,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.28	2.32	2.26	2.26	330,000
Medco Holdings	0.75	0.75	0.7	0.7	340,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.78	1.82	1.78	1.78	4,435,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	100,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.61	0.66	0.6	0.65	261,250,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.42	0.29	0.42	74,650,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.41	0.46	0.41	0.44	4,810,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1.06	1.1	1.06	1.1	1,391,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.54	0.56	0.53	0.56	480,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.47	0.5	0.47	0.5	200,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	1,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.165	0.17	4,750,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.23	0.27	0.23	0.24	9,550,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.37	0.44	0.37	0.41	6,900,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Metro Alliance Holdings	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.49	70,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.94	0.96	0.94	0.96	310,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.09	0.11	0.09	0.11	10,000,000
Pryce Corp.	0.27	0.45	0.27	0.45	30,290,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.21	0.26	0.21	0.26	710,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.4	1.86	1.38	1.82	88,811,000
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	7.8	14	7.8	14	13,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	1.22	1.36	1.22	1.34	7,231,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.82	0.93	0.82	0.92	4,400,000
Manila Jockey Club	4.8	5	4.8	4.9	282,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	1,040,000
Philippine Racing Club	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	60,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	17.25	17.25	17	17	538,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.2	9.3	39,348,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	300,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	13,000
Cebu Holdings Inc	0.93	0.95	0.93	0.95	490,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.38	5,680,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.28	0.21	0.28	72,360,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.28	0.37	0.28	0.36	4,710,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.56	0.57	42,010,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	118,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.76	1.78	13,599,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.2	0.22	0.2	0.22	3,640,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.23	250,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.31	0.27	0.29	8,010,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.8	700,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.195	0.26	0.195	0.23	2,170,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.21	0.24	0.195	0.205	5,780,000
Primex Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	36,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	90,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.3	6,390,000
SM Development Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.86	1.9	2,041,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	4,571,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.36	1.36	1.3	1.3	771,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.34	1.36	1.3	1.3	627,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	33,500,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev't	7.2	7.3	7.1	7.3	442,000
Benguet Corp. A	9	9	9	9	45,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	18,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.4	52,140,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.43	24,260,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	84,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.03	332,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.0075	0.0085	0.0075	0.0085	2,606,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	1.14	1.16	1.12	1.16	1,515,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	1.38	1.4	1.36	1.36	3,289,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	47	47	45.5	45.5	753,800
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.016	0.013	0.015	25,700,000
Interport Res.	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	23,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	15,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	25,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	4,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.4	500,000
Pacifica	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	34,900,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	26,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.2	0.135	0.2	181,510,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.4	0.43	0.4	0.4	350,000

CURRENCIES

February 17, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.767342	1.000000	54.8430
Japan	Yen	0.007281	0.009489	0.5204
United Kingdom	Pound	1.446977	1.885700	103.4174
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098385	0.128215	7.0317
Switzerland	Franc	0.646400	0.842389	46.1991
Canada	Dollar	0.620777	0.808996	44.3678
Singapore	Dollar	0.467692	0.609496	33.4266
Australia	Dollar	0.599392	0.781128	42.8394
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.035444	2.652590	145.4760
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204625	0.266667	14.6248
Brunei	Dollar	0.466271	0.607644	33.3250
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000083	0.000108	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.019896	0.025928	1.4220
UAE	Dirham	0.208937	0.272287	14.9330
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.303200	71.4714
Argentina	Peso	0.264692	0.344947	18.9179
Brazil	Real	0.295529	0.385134	21.1219
Denmark	Kroner	0.134341	0.175073	9.6015
India	Rupee	0.017568	0.022894	1.2556
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.201959	0.263193	14.4343
Mexico	New Peso	0.068854	0.089730	4.9211
New Zealand	Dollar	0.546345	0.711997	39.0481
South Africa	Rand	0.127946	0.166739	9.1445
Korea	Won	0.000749	0.000976	0.0535
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024310	0.031681	1.7375

Philips' 2004 sales up 20%

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PHILIPS Consumer Electronics Philippines, the local unit of Royal Philips Electronics of the Netherlands, yesterday reported a 20-percent growth in sales revenue to some $51 million in 2004.

Philips officials said the growth in sales firmed up the company's decision to expand its presence here.

Alan Sparks, Philips Electronics' senior vice president for Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa, did not say how the firm would go about its expansion.

"But to give you an idea," Sparks said, "we posted [last year] $10 billion in sales revenues worldwide. Asia Pacific accounts for 17 percent of that, while Southeast Asia represents a quarter of Asia Pacific."

In turn, the Philippines takes up 12 percent of Philips Electronic's Southeast Asian market, he added.

According to Sparks, who is based in Singapore, Philips' business in the Philippines is very profitable. He said the firm developed its unit here as one of its manufacturing hubs worldwide.

"The Philippines is a strategic manufacturing base for chips [semiconductors], just as China is a strategic base for making television sets," he said.

Sparks said that with the company's current position in the local market, it was now looking at further expanding its presence here in the areas of information and communication technologies.

During a visit to the country last October, Royal Philips president and chief executive Gerald Kleisterlee said the firm would invest at least $250 million over the next three years to expand its Philippine operations.

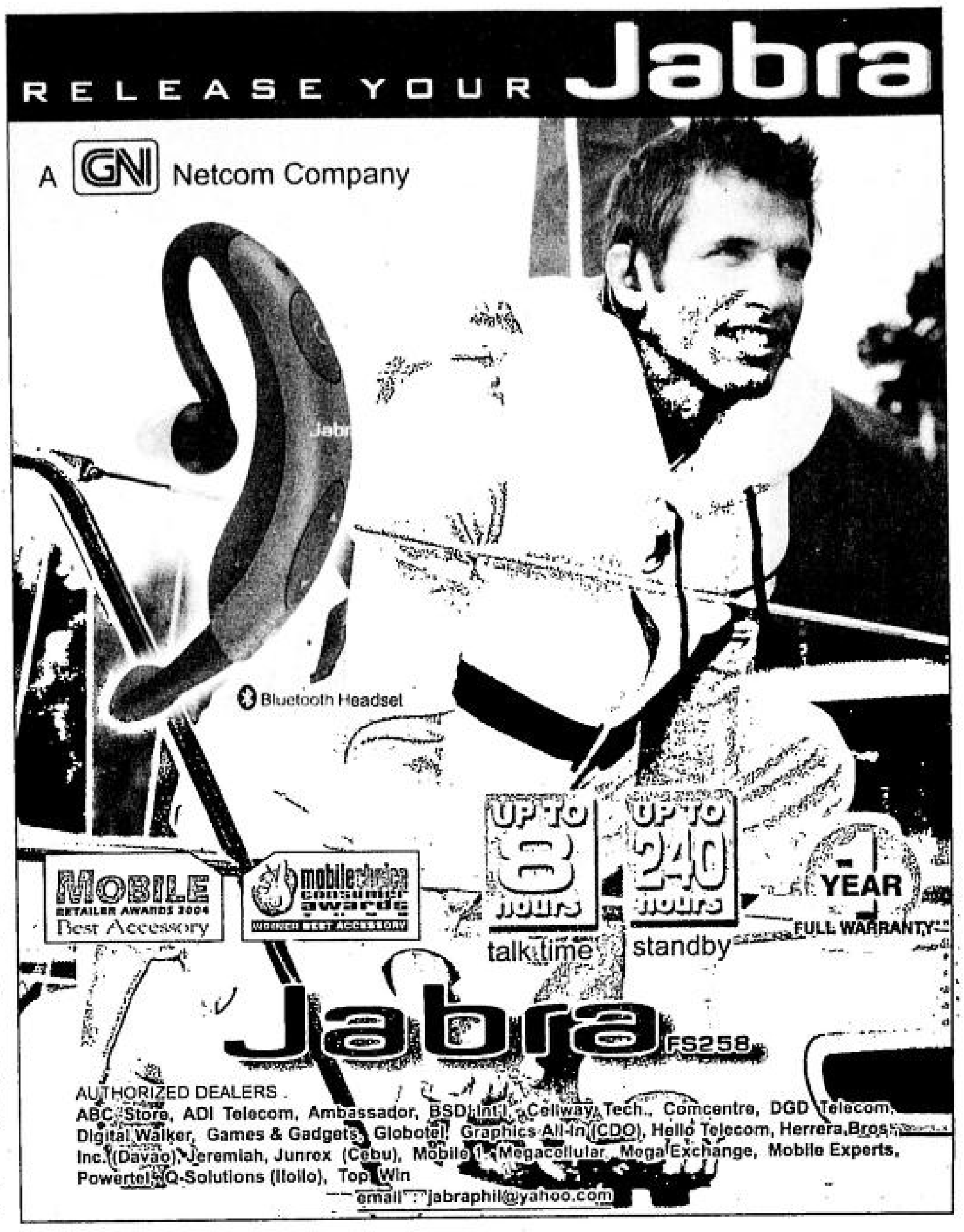
Klesterlee said the investment would go to its assembly and testing plant in Cabuyao, Laguna.

According to the company's website, Philips Semiconductors Inc. in Cabuyao is a state-of-the-art facility for the assembly and testing of more than 5,000 different discrete products.

Philips' plant at the Light Industry and Science Park I is known for its power and general-use products, as well as for the manufacture of RF mobile communication units.

The company's other facility—Philips Semiconductors located at the Light Industry and Science Park II in Calamba—is involved in the assembly and testing of integrated circuits.

Royal Philips has invested $465 million in the country over the last 15 years.



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Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI) is the exclusive distributor of Hyundai vehicles and Hyundai MOBIS parts in the Philippines.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER **EXHIBITS** [illegible]

Fri., February 18, 2005

127 Years of the MWSS

PROVIDING CLEAN & SAFE WATER FOR ALL

by Rey L. Quiason, Jr. & Vangie Aquino-Quiason

Oscar I. Garcia
MWSS Chairman

Orlando C. Hondrade
MWSS Administrator

MWSS' target is to provide potable water to 117 waterless areas in Metro Manila. This agenda target stems from Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's desire to alleviate poverty, in line with the Millennium Development Goals adopted by all members of the United Nations in an effort to stamp out absolute poverty worldwide by 2015.

Tubig sa bawat barangay...

This is a major battle cry under the 10-Point Action Agenda of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as outlined by the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), 2004-2010.

The target is to provide potable water to 117 waterless areas in Metro Manila and 633 areas in municipalities outside Manila. This agenda target stems from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's desire to alleviate poverty, in line with the Millennium Development Goals adopted by all members of the United Nations in an effort to stamp out absolute poverty worldwide by 2015.

In this respect, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and its private sector partners are committed to this goal amid the challenges posed by Metro Manila's growing population and limited resources.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself reiterated this goal of providing safe potable water to all Filipinos during a visit last December in typhoon-ravaged Infanta, Quezon province where she surveyed the heavy damage wrought to the Umiray-Angat infrastructures. The MWSS has been ordered to repair the damage and resume operations by April of this year.

Full Steam Ahead:
Programs for 2005

The completion of clearing and de-clogging on the Umiray-Angat project, particularly the tunnel that transports water from the Umiray river to the Angat Dam in Bulacan, is expected to be finished by April or May this year, according to MWSS Administrator Orlando C. Hondrade.

At present, Angat Dam is the major source of water , providing 97 percent of total requirements of Metro Manila and the surrounding areas. The remaining three percent is provided by deep wells. From Angat, water flows six kilometers to Ipo Dam and passes through three tunnels leading to the Bicti Basins where five aqueducts transport the water through a 15.5 km. route to the La Mesa Reservoir in Quezon City.

Depending solely on Angat, therefore, is not a practical option given the growing population of Metro Manila. In fact, the MWSS estimates that the present supply of 4,000 million liters per day (MLD) from Angat Dam – which also supplies irrigation water to parts of Central Luzon as well as hydroelectric power, is not enough to meet demand in Metro Manila. Other water sources should therefore be tapped.

Administrator Hondrade says the MWSS has already formulated a development plan for Future Water Supply Sources for Metro Manila over the interim and long term. Implementation period for the interim projects would take two to four years with technical assistance grants having been secured, for the following projects : (a) Wawa River project that could supply 40 MLD; (b) Angat Water Utilization and Aqueduct Improvement Project, with its expected supply of 750 MLD; and (c) treated bulk water supply, that could provide anywhere from 300 to 700 MLD.

The Wawa River, a former water source for Manila several decades ago, would be revived to make it a viable resource again. As for the treated bulk water supply, the main source will be Laguna de Bay.

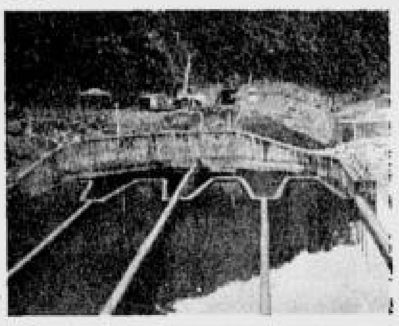
Over the long term, from 2007 to 2024, the plan calls for the development of two dams that will harness the waters of Laiban River and the Agos River, both in Quezon province. The Laiban Dam project is scheduled for completion in 2012 and is expected to provide 1900 MLD. The Agos Dam will be constructed in two phases, from 2017 to 2024, and is expected to supply 1500 MLD for each phase, or a total 3000 MLD.

While waiting for these projects, particularly those for the interim term to be completed, the MWSS Regulatory Office headed by Chief Regulator Eduardo C. Santos is pushing for more prudent use of water by the public in the face of possible reduced water supply because of the El Nino phenomenon (see Sidebar Story).

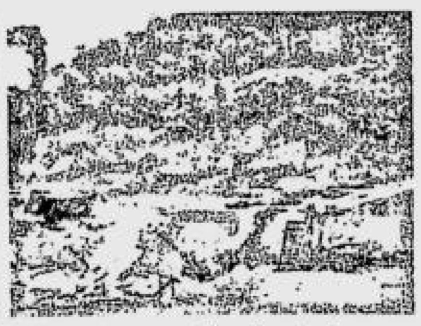
Managing Resources
To Meet Future Needs

As the MWSS turns 127 years old today, it will have a new chairman in the person of Oscar I. Garcia, a former Government Corporate Counsel and was a member of the MWSS board for five years. Having witnessed the transition from a public utility to a privatized set-up, the new chairman is pleased on how MWSS is managing resources to provide for future needs.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo inspects typhoon damaged UATP on December 17, 2004



UATP before typhoon Winnie



UATP damaged by the typhoon

The MWSS, he says, is a conduit between the consumers and the concessionaires. "I see the efforts of the MWSS to respond to the needs and recognize the motivations of the concessionaires; bring them the resources and aid that will enable them to move forward," he explains.

"At the moment, the two concessionaires distributing water in Metro Manila – the Manila Water, Inc. and the Maynilad Water Services, are doing fine in their key performance indicators (KPI) relating to water and customers' services result areas. They are trying their best to meet their sewerage KPI's and had considerably improved on some of their business efficiency measures (BEM), except on the non-revenue yardstick," according to Chairman Garcia. "In the case of Maynilad Water Services, based on their reallocation program, we have to discuss and refine their KPI," Chief Regulator Santos adds.

Chairman Garcia is mindful of the operations of the two concessionaires to ensure that no untoward interruption of water distribution occurs. With the various expansion programs of the two firms, more and more households

turn to B-7

Maynilad sets new and innovative operating model for water recovery

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. has come up with a new solution to the problem of Non-Revenue Water through the Tondo Foreshore F-1 Pilot Project, which effectively recovered lost water for reallocation to under-served areas in the West Concession.

The Tondo Project replaced and upgraded the antiquated water pipe network in eleven barangays in the first district of Tondo (Barangays 96 to 106) known as the F-1 Zone, which benefited 6,500 households or around 46,000 residents.

The construction of a new 15-kilometer pipe network dramatically reduced NRW in Tondo's F-1 from 90 percent to less than 10 percent, representing a recovery of about 27 mld. (million liters of water per day) with a value of about P400,000 per day or P180 million per year. (NRW is water supplied that is unbilled, either lost to physical leaks or through illegal connections.)

The project, which cost P53.2 million, was completed in a record time of less than 75 days. The fast work is due to the use of an innovative scheme wherein temporary but sturdy facilities ("tempfacil") are laid at ground level, and made an integral part of the curbs and sidewalks.

This new method in pipe laying was conceptualized by Maynilad president Fiorello Estuar. It replaced the long and costly work of digging out the old pipes and replacing them, and minimized inconvenience to motorists and pedestrians.

APAGAL-ARROYO
WATER
EMENT PROJECT
ena Sts., Tondo

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hands over the project token to Barangay captain Alberto Carpio (left) during the formal inauguration of the Tondo F-1 Zone Water Supply Improvement Project last December 13, 2004. With her are (from left) Manila mayor Lito Atienza, MWSS administrator Orlando Hondrade and Maynilad president Fiorello Estuar.

The Tondo Project was inaugurated last December 13, 2004 by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Manila mayor Lito Atienza, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System administrator Orlando Hondrade, and Estuar.

Manila mayor Lito Atienza, WPD director Pedro Bulaong and Maynilad president Fiorello Estuar grab giant wrenches to demonstrate the pipe-jointing of a 150 mm. GI pipe along Maginoo St. in Tondo, Manila as part of the Tondo Foreshore F-1 Pilot Project's groundbreaking ceremony held last September 23, 2004.

Atienza lauded Maynilad for the project. He described it as an innovative solution to a long-festering health and social problem in Tondo.

With the success of the Tondo Project, Maynilad applied the same method of construction to the Dagat-Dagatan area, which also has a high NRW rate.

The Dagat-Dagatan Project also seeks to upgrade the old water distribution system in the area (Lower Caloocan, Malabon and the municipality of Navotas) to help improve water quality and availability, and enhance the area's health and sanitation.

This project involves the installation of 86.35 kilometers of new pipes throughout the area, which has been divided into eight phases. Each construction package will be completed within 90 to 120 days. Entire project cost is placed at P176.5 million.

After project completion, some 167,000 people living in Dagat-Dagatan will benefit from the improved water supply. The volume of water that will be saved is estimated at 15.76 mld. This recovered water will then be reallocated to Bagong Silang in Upper Caloocan, where it will benefit some 57,000 families.

The ceremonial groundbreaking of the Dagat-Dagatan Mainline Replacement P-1 Project was held last February 10, 2005, led by Caloocan City mayor Enrico Echiverri, Caloocan City police chief Senior Superintendent Leo Garra, MWSS administrator Hondrade and Maynilad president Estuar.

Temporary but sturdy pipes ("tempfacil") are placed at ground level and made an integral part of sidewalks in order to facilitate the speedy construction of water facilities in the F-1 Zone. Looking on are (from left) Central Business Area (CEBA) Technical Sector manager Benjie Reyes, CEBA Tondo Sector manager Rustico Icamina, and Central Construction-PMG manager Virgilio Agustin.

EXHIBITS [illegible]

from B-6

— especially in the waterless areas, are expected to have regular water supply connections.

"Given the economic situation, I am aware of the focus given by the concessionaires on achieving the standards they are being asked to meet (service coverage, improve service standards, reduce water losses and increase operating efficiency) and on their cost competitiveness," the Chairman adds. "The potentials for initiatives and improvements in the concession areas are limitless and with transparent and accountable management from us in the government, the concessionaires should be able to upgrade their treatment and distribution systems, thus ensure the well-being and wellness of communities, of people and humanity as a whole."

On the water rates, Garcia views this area as a ticklish one. "Cost of water is a function both of quality and availability", he points out. "Rate adjustments are needed to pay for operation, maintenance costs of ageing infrastructure, expansion and development projects, and the like. If customers are aware that they are getting excellent value for the cost of water services and improved water quality delivered to their homes, they would be willing to pay for it."

MWSS in 2004:
Operations Are Self-Reliant

Chairman Garcia is proud that the MWSS has been contributing to the poverty eradication of the President in line with her 10-Point Action Agenda. ". . .since the start of our partnership with our concessionaires in the provision of potable water thru their Bayan Tubig (Maynilad) and Tubig para sa Barangay (Manila Water) programs, more than 200,000 families in the depressed communities have been benefited. Over the next five years additional 111,000 underprivileged families (71,000 in the West zone and 40,000 in the East zone) will be served." he says.

Unlike most government utility and service-oriented agencies, the MWSS operations have posted positive income and have not relied on financial assistance or subsidy from the national government. "It even contributed to the national coffers in the form of dividends, from P53 million remitted in 2002, and P65 million in 2003," reports Administrator Hondrade. In 2001, MWSS posted a net income of P178.8 million; in 2002, P217.7 million; and in 2003, P195.9 million.

Preliminary figures show that revenue for 2004 may reach P268 million which, after deduction of expenses could result in a net income of about P57 million.

The MWSS chief also reports that the number of people provided with clean and safe water has increased. Through its concessionaires, the water agency has been serving 2.06 million more people, of a total of 10.9 million people as of December 2004 compared with that in 2000. This year, 2005, the figure is targeted to reach 11.10 million people, or 88 percent of water service coverage.

Last year, the two concessionaires expanded their water service connections by 20 percent from 981,000 in 2000 to 1.178 million by the end of 2004. On the average, water supply in the areas serviced by Manila Water was 22 hours, compared with 19 hours in the areas of Maynilad Water Services.

With the cooperation of the Office of the President, the Philippine Gaming Corporation (PagCor), and its concessionaires, the MWSS implemented the Patubig ni GMA in the waterless urban poor areas of Metro Manila and some parts of Rizal and Cavite provinces. A total of 836,456 households in these areas were provided with regular water supply through static and mobile water tankers and installation of public faucets.

In line with the President's instruction to install permanent water connections in the waterless areas of urban poor communities, water lines worth P81 million were put up in 13 barangays, benefiting 117,900 residents. Currently ongoing are 14 more distribution line projects that will benefit at least 366,200 people.

To ensure continuity of water supply operations in the metropolis, the MWSS is closely overseeing the repairs of major aqueducts and pipelines. Currently undergoing construction is the 5.5 km Bicti-Novaliches Aqueduct (BNAQ-6) a substitute conveyance line for Aqueduct No. 5 that would also serve as a by-pass line while rehabilitation works on the other existing aqueducts (1,2,3 and 4) are being undertaken. Rehabilitation works of the Umiray-Angat transbasin tunnel and its facilities are in progress.

The MWSS continues to coordinate with its major partners – including its concessionaires as well as concerned nongovernmental organizations (NGO) in protecting its water resources. With the assistance of the Bantay Kalikasan Foundation, Manila Water Company and the Quezon City government, the agency continues to enhance development and protection of the Balara and La Mesa areas where its major water treatment facilities are located.

This partnership is expected to be sustained and developed as greater public awareness is fostered concerning the importance to conserve water and its wise and prudent use.

WATER SAVING TIPS
RECYCLE AND RE-USE WATER

Make
every
drop
count!

IN THE BATHROOM

Turn off the water while shaving, brushing your teeth, etc. Use a glass to gargle.

Use only short bursts of water from the tap to rinse your toothbrush or razor.

Take shorter showers or use a pail and a tabo instead of the shower.

Turn off the water when soaping and shampooing.

Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket.

Fix leaky faucets and toilets.

LAUNDRY

When washing by washing machine.

Wash only full loads of laundry.

Don't use more water or soap than what is actually needed.

Avoid double washing by pre-soaking clothes. Use pre-soak setting on the washer or start the wash cycle to partially fill the tub, turn the washer off and allow clothes to soak, then turn the wash cycle on without draining the tub.

When washing by hand.

Soak heavily soiled clothes first to remove dirt easily.

Don't let the basin overflow under a running tap.

IN THE KITCHEN

When cleaning vegetables, soak them first in a basin of water rather than rinsing them under a running faucet.

Soak pots, pans and dishes immediately after they are used to reduce the water needed to clean them.

Soak greasy plates first in hot water. Wash slightly greased utensils first before the greasier ones.

Do not thaw frozen food under a running tap.

IN THE GARDEN

Water your plants, garden during the cool part of the day.

Capture and store rainwater for watering the garden.

IN THE GARAGE

When washing your car, use a pail, not a water hose, and a cotton rag instead of a sponge.

Sweep the driveway instead of washing with a hose.

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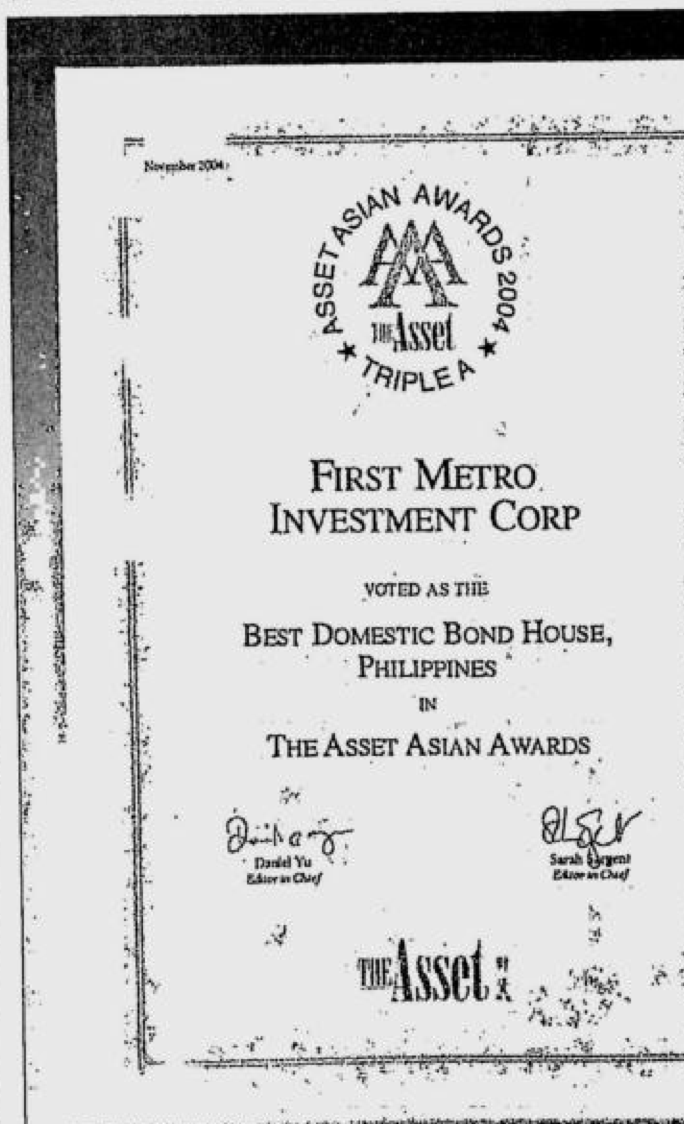
- Industrial Effluent Treatment
- Geotechnical Engineering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11.75% Retail Treasury Bonds due 2009
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July 2004

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PhP3,000,000,000
Five Year Floating Rate Notes
Joint Issue Manager & Joint Lead Underwriter
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Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System
PhP780,000,000
Bonds due 2005
Guaranteed by the Republic of the Philippines
Sole Underwriter
November 2004

AYALA CORPORATION
PhP7,000,000,000
Retail Corporate Bonds
Joint Issue Manager & Joint Lead Underwriter
October 2004

Republic of the Philippines
US$250,000,000
5.625% Treasury Bonds due 2006
Joint Lead Manager
November 2003

FILINVEST
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Floating Rate Corporate Notes
Sole Arranger and Coordinating Lead Manager
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US economy still in good shape, Greenspan says

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan told Congress on Wednesday that the US economic expansion rolled into the new year at a respectable pace and that inflation—while not an immediate threat—is something policy-makers must continue to guard against.

Greenspan, delivering the Fed's twice-a-year economic outlook to lawmakers, struck a fairly positive tone about the economy, which had been mired in a midyear lull last year and has since improved.

"All told, the economy seems to have entered 2005 expanding at a reasonably good pace, with inflation and inflation expectations well-anchored," Greenspan said in prepared testimony before the Senate banking committee.

Touching on one of the hottest issues in Washington—President George W. Bush's proposal to reform Social Security—Greenspan also repeated his call to Congress to take action to shore up the massive entitlement programs of Social Security and Medicare.

Those programs face huge financial strains with the looming retirement of 78 million baby boomers in 2008.

"Benefits promised to a burgeoning retirement-age population under mandatory entitlement programs, most notably Social Security and Medicare, threaten to strain the resources of the working-age population in the years ahead," Greenspan said.

"Real progress on these issues will unavoidably entail many difficult choices. But the demographics are inexorable and call for action," he added.

In his prepared remarks, Greenspan didn't prescribe any fixes or weigh in on Bush's proposal to allow workers under age 55 to divert a chunk of their Social Security taxes into voluntary, private investment accounts.

In previous appearances before Congress the Fed chief has said benefit cuts and possibly tax increases would be needed to close the massive funding gap faced by Social Security, the US state pension system.

How inflation fares in the coming months will shape whether Fed policy-makers—now on a gradual path of raising short-term interest—will need to speed up or slow down that campaign, Greenspan indicated.

One factor to keep an eye on is whether companies—amid slowing productivity growth—boost workers' salaries and then pass along those higher costs onto customers, the Fed chief said.

"Going forward, the implications for inflation will be influenced by the extent and persistence of any slowdown in productivity," Greenspan said.

The inflation outlook also will be shaped by the direction of oil prices and the value of the dollar, which has been falling over the last few years.

Federal Reserve policy-makers embarked on a rate-raising campaign in June and have pushed up short-term interest rates six times, each in modest, quarter-point moves.

The last rate increase on Feb. 2 left a key rate at 2.5 percent. Another rate boost is expected at the Fed's next meeting on March 22.

Before the Fed started to push up rates in June, its key rate, the funds rate, was at a 46-year low of one percent.

The funds rate is the interest banks charge each other on overnight loans and is the Fed's main tool to influence economic activity.

That extraordinarily low rate was used to shore up the economy, which struggled to recover from the recession of 2001 and the Sept. 11 attacks.

With the economic expansion more deeply rooted, the Fed needs to move the funds rate to a more normal level so all the cheap money does not lay the groundwork for inflation.

Despite the Fed's increases to short-term rates, long-term rates such as mortgage rates, have actually moved lower in recent months in the United States and some other countries, Greenspan said.

Private economists have been puzzled by the decline in long-term interest rates and Greenspan admitted that he was stumped as well.

"For the moment, the broadly unanticipated behavior of world bond markets remains a conundrum," Greenspan said.

But the Fed chief cautioned that investors should be careful in taking the continued existence of low long-term rates for granted.

Fed policy-makers in an updated economic forecast said economic growth this year should clock in at a range of 3.75 percent to 4 percent, as measured from the fourth quarter of last year. That's about the same as the 3.7 percent growth seen in 2004.

On the inflation front, a gauge of prices that excludes food and energy costs is projected to increase around 1.5 percent to 1.75 percent this year—close to the 1.6 percent increase registered in 2004. *AP*

Singapore grows 8.4% in 2004

SINGAPORE—Singapore's economy grew 8.4 percent in 2004 after posting a surprisingly strong performance in the final quarter, the government said Thursday even as it maintained its projection for a slowdown this year.

The full-year economic growth numbers were revised upwards from a preliminary figure of 8.1 percent released in January, with annualized growth in the final three months raised from 5.4 percent to 6.5 percent.

However, the Ministry of Trade and Industry maintained its forecast of 3.0-5.0-percent expansion for 2005, citing high oil prices and a slowdown in semiconductor exports as factors that will limit growth.

Separate government figures released Thursday showed lower-than-expected exports growth in January due to weakness in the electronics and pharmaceuticals sectors, further highlighting the potential risks for this year.

Non-oil domestic exports growth of 9 percent compared with 8 percent in December and 16.5 percent in November. The January figure was below analysts' forecasts of 10.2-23.3 percent.

The expansion in 2004 was the Singapore economy's fastest for four years as it came off a low base in 2003, when the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) crisis led to growth of just 1.4 percent. *AFP*

Sony Ericsson inks music deal

CANNES, France—Sony Ericsson plans to combine digital music players into mobile phones under the Walkman brand as part of its mobile music strategy for 2005.

The strategy will focus on delivering easy-to-use music phones supported by a full range of music download services, including Sony Group digital music offerings.

"The Walkman showed us that people of every generation love listening to music while on the move, and we believe the mobile phone is the perfect device to extend the world of digital mobile music to a much wider audience," says Miles Flint, president of Sony Ericsson.

"Since its creation, Sony has sold more than 340 million units of Walkman branded music devices globally, illustrating the mass appeal of mobile music. Sony Ericsson is proud to write a new chapter in the Walkman story."

Sony Ericsson's range of Walkman-branded phones will support the most popular digital music file formats and services.

The first Walkman branded Sony Ericsson music phones will be announced in March and enable users to transfer their existing CD collections to their phones via personal computers.

US STOCKS ended little changed as Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenpan's upbeat assessment of the US economy was tempered by expectations that more interest rate hikes are on the way. AFP

US, EU voice free trade goal

BRUSSELS—The United States and the European Commission voiced Wednesday their desire to strengthen economic cooperation and promote the idea of a "barrier-free" transatlantic market during an official visit by new US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

Gutierrez, in his first international trip as US commerce secretary, after meeting with the European Union's enterprise and industry commissioner Guenter Verheugen, said they had had a "constructive conversation today about how best to create a transatlantic environment that promotes innovation, competitiveness and economic growth."

Gutierrez said he was looking forward to working closely with Verheugen "on our joint efforts to advance the barrier-free transatlantic marketplace, as supported by the TABD (Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue)."

"We hope to have recommendations for joint action to deliver to Presidents (George W.) Bush and (Jose Manuel) Barroso at the next US-EU summit this summer in Washington," Gutierrez said in a statement issued by the EU executive branch.

Verheugen emphasized shared values on the importance of public policy setting.

"We share the view that governments have to set the right framework so that industry can create growth and jobs," the EU commissioner said in the statement.

"By removing barriers to transatlantic trade and investment, we will facilitate for our respective business communities to do so," he added.

Gutierrez said he was interested in hearing Verheugen's views on the commission's work to advance European growth and competitiveness under the re-launch of the Lisbon Agenda.

"A strong, vibrant Europe is a necessary and essential partner for the US," Gutierrez said.

Last November Bush named Gutierrez, a Cuban exile who clambered to the top of cereals giant Kellogg Co., as his next commerce secretary to replace Donald Evans, who resigned. *AFP*

Asian stocks steady

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks edged higher on Thursday as a rally in crude oil prices underpinned resource stocks, while the dollar was supported by US Fed chief Alan Greenspan's comment that US interest rates were "fairly low."

Tokyo's Nikkei average was little changed as falls in stocks that had gained recently, such as Nippon Steel Corp., were offset by rises in resource-related stocks.

Some foreign investors sold Tokyo stocks in the wake of data on Wednesday showing Japan's economy contracted for the third straight quarter in October-December and after the Nikkei average hit its highest level since July on the same day.

By the midday break, the Nikkei was up 0.22 percent at 11,626.93. MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares had edged higher by 0230 GMT, supported by stronger Singapore stocks.

Singapore's Straits Times Index was up a fifth of a percent, helped by data before the open showing much-better-than expected economic growth in the fourth quarter. United Overseas Bank Ltd. rose 1.42 percent.

Australia's resources-rich market rose 0.2 percent. Mining giant BHP Billiton rose more than 2 percent.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index edged lower, despite a one percent rise on Chinese oil major, Petrochina.

US crude oil futures rose for a second day, eyeing $49 a barrel, after a US government warning that an Opec output cut could cause a supply crunch outweighed local inventory gains.

The dollar was at 105.35 yen, a touch down from 105.42 yen in New York, and $1.3043 per euro, also little changed from late in the US. The dollar had climbed to around 105.75 yen and $1.2960 versus the euro on Greenspan's testimony.

With much of what Greenspan said on the first day of his widely anticipated congressional testimony common knowledge in the market, volumes were limited.

But Greenspan's comment that interest rates remained "fairly low" reinforced expectations that the Federal Reserve would continue to raise rates at a measured pace, dealers said.

The Bank of Japan ends a policy meeting on Thursday. *Reuters*

HP profit edges higher

PALO ALTO, California—US computer giant Hewlett-Packard said Thursday its profit in the most recent quarter edged up one percent from a year earlier to $943 million as revenues from services rose sharply.

The company, which last week dumped Carly Fiorina as chair and chief executive, said the earning excluding one-time events amounted to 35 cents a share, a penny better than the average Wall Street forecast.

Revenues in the fiscal first quarter ended Jan. 31 hit a record $21.45 billion, up 9.9 percent from the same period a year ago and well ahead of most analyst projections.

The company said it sees revenues for the current quarter between $21.2 and $21.6 billion, better than the average First Call analyst forecast of $21.12 billion.

"HP had a solid first quarter, highlighted by strong growth and profit in our personal systems group (computer), strong revenue growth in our services business and cash flow from operations of $1.6 billion," said Robert Wayman, the chief finance officer tapped last week as interim HP chief executive officer.

"While we continue to make progress in growing our top line, there is work to be done to improve our profitability. As the board conducts a CEO search, our management team is focused on driving improved execution to serve our customers, strengthen our competitiveness and improve shareholder value."

Sales from the computer division grew 11 percent to $6.9 billion while unit shipments increased 12 percent year-over-year, reflecting relatively stable average selling prices.

The imaging and printing group, the highly profitable printer division, saw a 3 percent growth in revenues to $6.1 billion.

The technology solutions group, which includes storage and services, reported a 14 percent gain in revenues to $8.1 billion. *AFP*

Opec ups forecast for world oil demand

LONDON—The Opec oil cartel on Wednesday raised its forecast for world oil demand growth this year but projected a modest build in stocks of spare oil when consumption eases after the northern hemisphere winter.

Opec said it expected world oil demand this year to grow at 1.73 million barrels per day (bpd), up 80,000 bpd from a previous forecast, though slower than last year's 2.55 million bpd rise which pushed oil prices to record highs.

Demand strength is being led by China, where power shortages are forcing increased oil-burning to meet surging electricity needs, Opec said in its monthly Oil Market Report.

"Besides the problems in the electricity sector, the rapid growth in construction and transportation sectors will continue to drive demand in the near future," the report said.

The report raised its forecast of demand for Opec's oil in the first quarter this year by 270,000 bpd to 29.04 million bpd.

Opec production fell 610,000 bpd in January to 29.15 million bpd after the group agreed to cut production by 1 million bpd from Jan. 1 to bolster prices, the report said.

If Opec kept supply at current levels, stocks would edge up by 100,000 bpd in the first quarter and then swell 1.4 million bpd in the second quarter.

"Opec will continue monitoring market developments very closely, in particular price developments and commercial crude oil stock levels, both in absolute terms and in days of forward demand cover, given the continued strength of demand observed in recent years," the report said.

Opec's acting secretary general said on Wednesday that the group was leaning toward a plan to reduce oil production at its mid-March meeting in Iran.

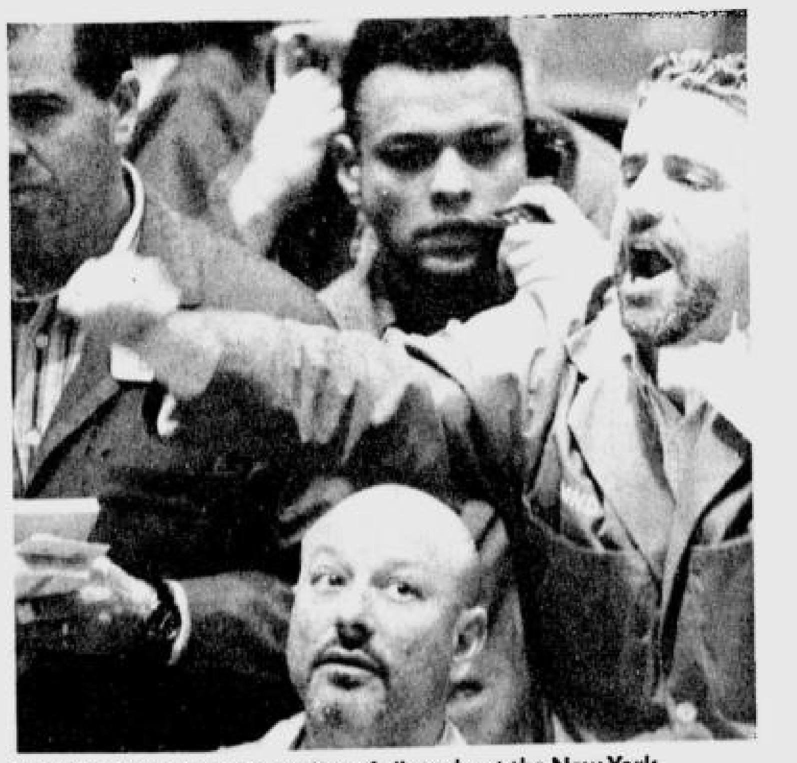
"There is a general tendency among Opec members to reduce production at the meeting and we will find out during the meeting whether there is a need to cut," Adnan Shihab-Eldin told Reuters.

US crude was up 10 cents at $47.36 a barrel on Wednesday. Prices have risen around $2 in the last week after the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported faster-than-expected demand and disappointing supply growth.

The IEA, which advises industrialized nations on energy policy, said projections of a second quarter stock build should not alarm producers as refiner demand for crude oil will not fall as sharply as end-user consumption.

Opec said there was concern among producers that stricter environmental regulations on refined products in China and India could lower demand for Opec's lower-quality grades of crude and hurt revenues.

"The adoption of stricter product specifications in Asia, in addition to those already in effect in Europe and the USA, could again focus price pressure on light sweet crudes, possibly triggering a substantial widening of the spread between sour and sweet grades, as was seen in the second half of 2004," the report said. *Reuters*



TRADERS react during trading of oil stocks at the New York Mercantile Exchange on Wednesday. AP

A NEW residential development will soon rise within the LiMA Township in Malvar/Lipa City, Batangas. The project will be a joint undertaking of Alsons Land Corp., landowner and Sunfields Realty and Development Inc., the developer. Signing the joint venture agreement were (from left) Noel Gonzales, chair of Sunfields, Tomas Alcantara, chair of the Alsons Group and Manuel Colayco, president of Sunfields. Witnessing the signing were Cheryl Chua of Sunfields, Marissa Concepcion of Alsons and Rowena Gonzales of Sunfields.

Another Wharton boy resigns

By Christine Gaylican

LORENZO

ANOTHER Wharton boy has opted out of the business of government and gone back to private trade.

Luis P. Lorenzo Jr., the former agriculture secretary, yesterday formally stepped down as jobs generation secretary and chairman of both the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Quedan Rural Credit and Guarantee Corp.

"I have formally filed my resignation, and the President understood my predicament," Lorenzo yesterday said during an emotional briefing. "I take pride in having played the part of implementing (President Macapagal-Arroyo's) economic programs. But my family has taken a lot of sacrifices through the last five years I have served in government."

Fighting off tears, Lorenzo said he regretted he was unable to accomplish the things he had set out to do in government—such as narrowing down the disparity between the rich and the poor. But he added he would continue to do his share in the private sector.

Lorenzo is one of the so-called Wharton boys who served under the Arroyo administration since the Edsa Revolution (Edsa II) in January 2001.

Lorenzo's batchmates at the prominent Wharton Business School of Finance are former Interior and Local Government Secretary Jose Lina, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez and Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

Lorenzo said he would go back and tend to the family business. His family owns the multimillion-dollar Lapanday Holdings Inc., and the Macondray Corp., which is into banana exports. The family is also a major shareholder in Del Monte Pacific Ltd., which is listed in the Singapore Stock Exchange.

Appointed as secretary of the agriculture department in December 2002, Lorenzo took a beating as head of the agency. He was accused of overspending government funds and was linked to vegetable smuggling.

LRT-1 delay to cost gov't, JBIC says

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation yesterday said stalling the completion of the P9-billion LRT 1 expansion project would cost the government an additional P200 million in annual interest payments.

JBIC had lent 18 billion yen to expand the capacity of the Line 1 Light Rail Transit running from Monumento to Baclaran.

The bulk of the loan will be used to buy 12 four-car trains, which will increase the Line 1's passenger capacity from 27,000 to 40,000 passengers per hour in each direction.

JBIC chief representative to the Philippines Osamu Murata said completing the expansion would ease commuter travel around Metro Manila and would set the stage for the extension of the Monumento-Baclaran line to Cavite.

Development was delayed after Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentevella called for an investigation into the expansion contract awarded by the LRT Administration to Sumitomo Corp. and Itochu Corp.

The lawmaker alleged that some LRTA officials received huge payoffs in exchange for rushing the awarding of the contract to the two Japanese firms. Marubeni Corp. lost in the bidding.

JBIC said Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza had given his go-ahead to the awarding of the contract to Sumitomo-Itochu, but Puentevella earlier noted that Mendoza did not sign a board resolution awarding the contract to the two Japanese firms.

LRTA Administrator Mel Robles added that every move he made—including awarding the contract in December 2004 to Sumitomo—was backed by the majority of the nine-member LRTA board.

"All my actions were governed by the board. Secretary Mendoza was only one of nine members. And even the secretary assured me that I could go ahead with the awarding even if he did not sign the resolution," said Robles in an interview.

Puentevella said the LRTA board changed the bids and awards committee midstream, raising serious doubts on the integrity of the bidding process.

Cosmos '04 profit down 57% to ₱234M

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SOFT DRINKS bottler Cosmos Bottling Corp. reported a 57-percent drop in net income last year to P234 million due to restructuring costs.

Cosmos embarked on a restructuring program to streamline and improve operations.

Operating income, however, rose 15 percent to P1 billion from P872 million on the back of record sales.

Cosmos, a subsidiary of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc., said in a statement that it set new records last year despite the weakness of the carbonated soft drinks market.

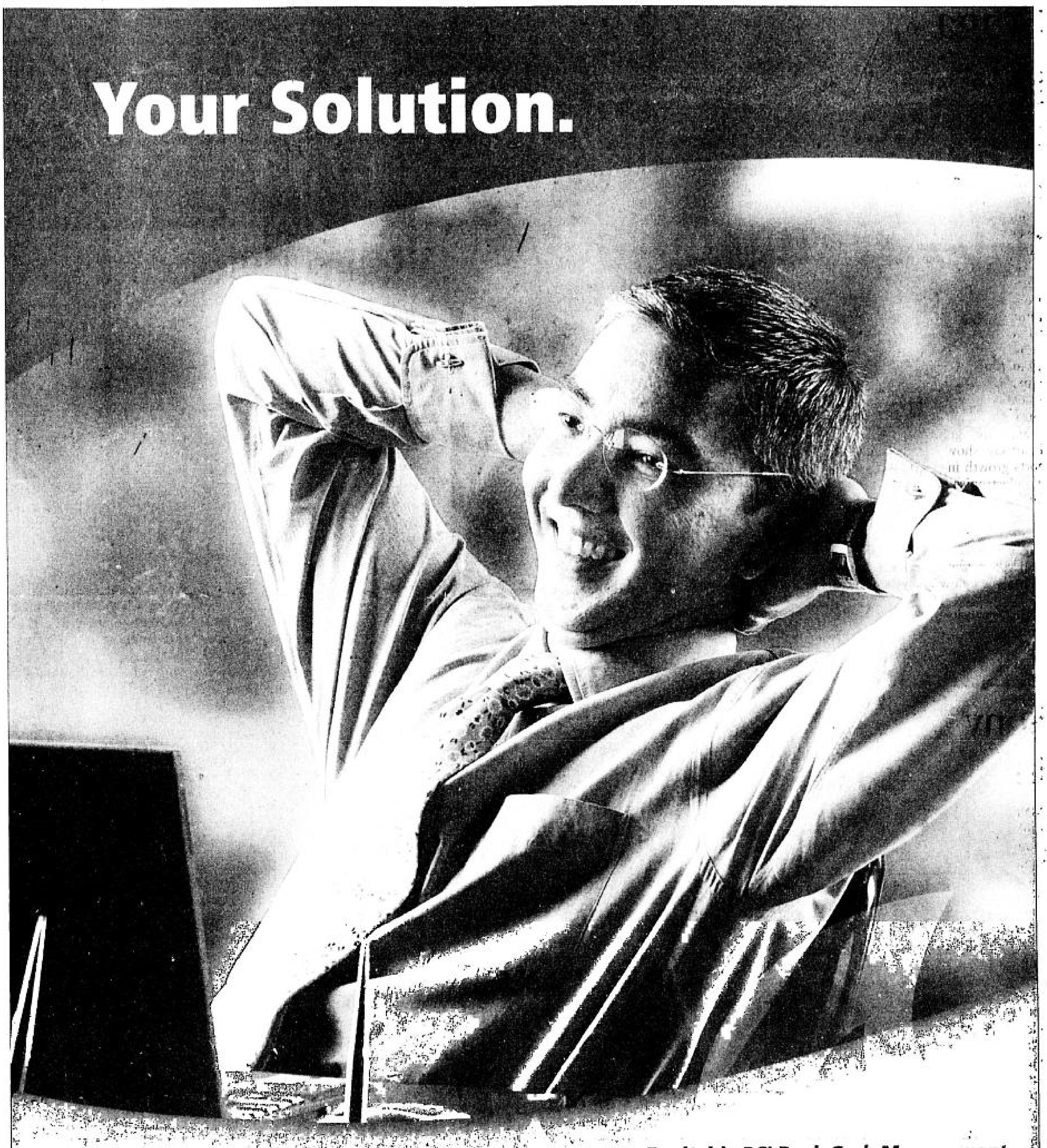
The company's operating income breached the P1-billion mark on record net sales revenues of P10.7 billion in 2004 from P9.9 billion in 2003.

Net sales revenues improved following the full impact of price adjustments made in 2003 and 2004, as well as Cosmos' aggressive and enhanced sales and distribution efforts.

Cosmos adopted in April a trade marketing program in Luzon that allowed it to strengthen its hold on areas it was already serving.

The company also expanded into new areas that allowed it to make inroads into markets served by competitors.

As a result of these efforts, Cosmos' market share continued to improve in 2004.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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

A second home: A prime investment

TAGAYTAY City, with its cool climate, breathtaking views of Taal Lake with its famous volcano, and fresh breeze, has lured many home and lot buyers who appreciate having a weekend home for relaxation. Just an hour's drive from Metro Manila on a normal day, Tagaytay hosts a lot of activities for the weary weekday executive and businessman.

The same people who appreciate Tagaytay's charms will be surprised to discover a new "satellite city" that perfectly combines work, relaxation, sports, and luxurious living. Within the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay industrial growth area will rise South Forbes Golf City, 250 hectares of prime land set amidst rolling hills as envisioned by premier property developer Cathay Land.

South Forbes features a gently sloping terrain, freshwater creeks, and old-growth forest trees. At 250 meters above sea level from its highest vantage point and with an average altitude of 200 meters, South Forbes gives residents a spectacular view of Tagaytay and Laguna de Bay.

Jeffrey Ng, president of Cathay Land, describes his biggest project to date: "The breadth and expanse of South Forbes Golf City differentiates it from other community developments. Only at South Forbes can a resident live comfortably close to the cool Tagaytay climate, enjoy top leisure and sports destinations within the vicinity, and grow a business as well."

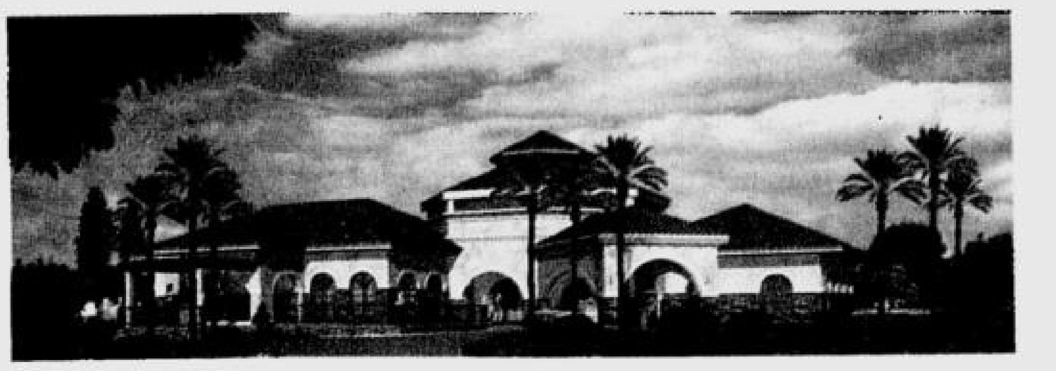
While South Forbes is ideal for couples who are starting to raise a family and intend to work in this self-sustaining city, it is also an ideal investment for couples and "singletons" who desire weekend getaways.

Top amenities make South Forbes the perfect Friday-Sunday leisure spot: village clubhouses will feature a 25-meter lap pool, putting green, basketball and tennis courts, pocket parks with landscaped walkways and jogging paths. For those who just want to take things easy, a business hotel will pamper guests with five-star services.

Encompassing about a third or 80 hectares of the entire city, the development's golf course will surely be on top of the weekend list of South Forbes lot buyers. The course was designed to take advantage of the area's natural environment. Thus, an avid golfer will find the course's many lakes and gently sloping freeways a joy to maneuver, while finding the various sandtraps that litter the course a fitting challenge.

After a round of golf, players and their companions can savor culinary treats at the main golf clubhouse's restaurants, or even refresh at the well-appointed shower rooms. They can also take a pick from the top golfing equipment available at the pro-shop. Lockers are also available at the clubhouse for frequent players who prioritize keeping their favorite golf tools handy and safe.

A free membership to the South Forbes Golf and Leisure Club can be easily obtained by getting a lot to build either a first or second home at the city's two main communities: South Forbes Villas and South Forbes Mansions. Designed to the Asian-Balinese theme, the Mansions feature homes with soothing interiors and landscaping perfect for the weekend.



ARTIST'S perspective of the Clubhouse

The Villas, on the other hand, offer homes with an Italian-Spanish motif that are ideal for family gatherings.

Ng advises wise investors, "With a home investment at South Forbes, you can also take advantage of the rapidly growing population and business potential of this city. Office buildings, call centers, and an arcaded retail area will rise along our main commercial avenue. With the 24-hour schedule of IT professionals, daytime office workers and residents combining to make a huge market, restaurants, lifestyle shops and the like will surely thrive at South Forbes."

Investors will also find it a good move to secure a second home at South Forbes. With business continuing to boom not only within South Forbes Golf City but also in the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay industrial hub, the market for rental homes and long term leases will continue to be strong. With recurring income, investors will have enough seed money and savings in preparation for their retirement at South Forbes.

Top amenities, a strong business potential, and its ideal location really make South Forbes Golf City the undeniable choice for a second home. To get a detailed preview of South Forbes, call 635-8108 or 636-4647, or log on to www.cathaylandinc.com.

PAS MEDCAP IN TARLAC

The Public Affairs Office of AFPRescom, led by commanding officer Col. Jesus G. Cabarrus recently conducted a massive medical, dental, optical, deworming, and milkfeeding with nutritional products operation recently in the town of Ramos, Tarlac. The service also included surgical operations for cataracts, circumcision and tubal ligation. Over 3,000 patients benefited from this event. Shown is Col. JG Cabarrus, commanding officer of PAS, TSgt. Susan Tenorio (PA) and Mayor Agrie Manglicmot of Ramos town at the pharmacy section.

Bits Clips

'Breaking The Silence'

TO THE world, he's "Wacko Jacko". But to Katherine and Joe Jackson, he's their son. On the eve of Michael Jackson's trial, his parents speak out for the first time about his controversial plastic surgeries, his bizarre public behavior and the various players in the media circus surrounding this so-called trial of the century. Star News Asia presented "Breaking The Silence: Our Son Michael Jackson" Feb. 17 exclusively on Star World. "Breaking The Silence: Our Son Michael Jackson" airs again on Star World today at 12:30 a.m., 3:30 a.m., 12 noon and Sunday, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. and 11 p.m.

SM North-Tradenet bridal fair set

TRADENET bridal fair, dubbed "Wedding Bliss", is set from Feb. 17 to March 2 at the lobby area, third floor near SM Department Store, SM City North Edsa, Quezon City. The participating establishments have come up with their own special packages for the fair. Participants are Robert Camba Catering, Jorge Portrait, J. Balbuena Photography, F. Topico Photo and Video, Days Hotel, Tagaytay Daka Hotel, Lexber Vacation Homes, RJM Photography, Justic Winery, Wedding Gowns by Sandra Lim, and wedding giveaways by LG Enterprise. Participants will be offering their goods and services to a wider market and will cater to the whims and caprice of the wed-to-be couple. For inquiries, call Tradenet at 805-5611, 803-1021, 0917-6285067, or e-mail tradenet8@yahoo.com.

URC Flour joins Bakery Fair 2005

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp (URC) flour division will stage free baking demonstrations during Bakery Fair 2005 to be held from Feb. 18 to 20 at the World Trade Center. Day one will feature a myriad of seminars and competitions including the Artistic Bread Baking Competition co-sponsored by URC Flour. A seminar on "How to Improve Your Bakery Business" is also set on Feb 19. And to cap off the three-day event, URC Flour sponsors an educational onstage demo led by pastry chef Dennis Hipolito, who shares his expertise in baking Sponge and Chiffon-based cakes. Organized by the Filipino-Chinese Bakery Association Inc. (FCBAI), Bakery Fair 2005 is proof of its continuing commitment to uplift the baking industry through product innovation and technological advancement. For inquiries, call the URC flour division at 672-1578 to 80 locals 118 or 216.

TWHI 32nd year

TAHANANG Walang Hagdanan Inc (TWHI) has gone a milestone as it celebrates its 32nd anniversary on Feb. 21. For the weeklong celebration at the center, the schedule of activities is: Feb. 21-foundation day (Holy Mass, special program and cake raffle); Feb. 21 to 26-Open House and Bodega Sale; and Feb. 26- "TWHI Anniversary Gimmick" (band concert with raffle). Special thanks to participating universities/colleges for the band concert, which are De La Salle, Greenhills; and Cainta Catholic College. Guest Bands and TV personalities with PBA's Talk and Text will also participate. Other sponsors and volunteers include ROA Musical Instruments; Tokyo Tokyo: Pizza Hut; Mon Ilagan of Cainta, Rizal: Barangay Chair Wilfredo Sulit; and CCC Community Extension Program. For more details, call: 240-1733, 248-2698, 655-4580, 655-0055, or e-mail fundraise_twh@tahananghagdanan.com.ph.

'Cyrano de Bergerac'

ATENEO de Manila High School's Dulaang Sibol presents Edmond Rostand's "Cyrano de Bergerac," as translated by Soc Rodrigo. The play is directed by Onofre Pagsanghan and features Justin Aquino, Criselle Consunji, and Leandro Ignacio. The performance today is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. at Tanghalang Pagsanghan, Ateneo campus in Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

Plasma Pleasures is back!

PLASMA Pleasures, the first and only Plasma and LCD TV exhibit in the country, makes a comeback as it rolls out the red carpet at the popular Greenhills Shopping Center from Feb. 11 to March 6.

Presented by Automatic Centre, the exhibit in Greenhills promises to deliver a truly Plasma Pleasure-able experience. "Expect the latest, clearest, biggest, and flattest Plasma TVs, LCD TVs, Projection TVs for 2005 to be on display at Plasma Pleasures", shares Geoffrey Lim, GM of Automatic Centre. Together, leading consumer electronics brands AOC, Audiovox-AR, Hitachi, JVC, Kolin-Syntax, LG, Philips, Panasonic, Pioneer, Samsung, Sharp, Sony and Toshiba will be showcasing over 50 of their best products at the three-week long entertainment exhibit.

Flat, large screen and high definition TVs have become a household staple in the United States, United Kingdom, and Europe as well as inside the homes of our Asian neighbors Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and Singapore. In fact, Plasmas, LCDs and Projection TVs are forecasted to replace conventional CRT televisions in the not too distant future due to distinct advantages in terms of size, clarity, color, brightness, contrast, as well as in power consumption. Having recently attended the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2005 in Las Vegas, Lim adds, "the global trend is definitely towards flatter and larger high definition TVs. Electronics manufacturers are trying to outdo each other to produce and showcase the largest and flattest screens in the market today. Among the CES highlights were the largest and flattest displays of the following television technologies: Plasma TV-102 inches; the LCD TV-65 inches; DLP Projection TV-70 inches and LCD Projection TV-70 inches".

For those unfamiliar with Plasma Pleasures, late in 2004, Automatic Centre decided to be the first to offer Filipinos an experiential encounter with the hottest thing in consumer electronics-flat panel, large screen, high definition TVs. Dubbed Plasma Pleasures, the exhibit debuted to raving reviews at the Glorietta in Makati before proceeding to wow southern Manila residents at the Alabang Town Center. Thousands of Filipinos were given their first experience with Plasma and LCD and they quickly discovered and appreciated the visual pleasures of these fast growing TV technologies.

Plasma Pleasures is certainly not your ordinary appliance exhibit as Automatic Centre made sure that aside from featuring the best and latest products, the flat panel, large screen and high definition TVs are presented in specially designed booths and platforms to highlight their particular features and qualities. Further, the spacious layout of the exhibit was specifically planned to maximize customer appreciation of the products while optimizing the flow of customers through the booths. Lim discusses "as each type of product is best enjoyed under certain conditions, we simply made sure that customers are able to experience Plasmas, LCDs and Projection TVs in the right environment."

Greenhills may be the third location for Plasma Pleasures, but Automatic Centre promises that the exhibit would exceed the Filipinos expectations once again. "We did not want the exhibit to seem repetitive so we worked doubly hard to keep Plasma Pleasures in Greenhills fresh and exciting," Lim shares. "We worked closely with our business partners to present the latest products this specific TV category. In fact, you can expect at least three new product launches at Plasma Pleasures in Greenhills plus you will see an even wider selection of high definition TVs on display." Automatic Centre also complemented the exhibit with ultra cool and hip gadgets on display such as the i-Pod from Apple, digital still and video cameras from Canon, JVC, Samsung and Sony as well as portable DVD players from Audiovox and Nextbase.

For those looking to bring home the Flat TV of their dreams, you can count on Automatic Centre, in partnership with BPI Cards, to bring you great discounts, unbelievable installment deals and fantastic freebies. At the Plasma Pleasures exhibit, you can avail yourself of 0 percent interest for up to 24-months on selected items and you can even get fabulous freebies such as a TV or a microwave oven on qualified purchases. Even better, watch out for a truly mind blowing deal at the exhibit as a free side-by-side refrigerator worth over P50,000 is being given away for free with a specific plasma TV purchase.

Plasma Pleasures certainly lives up to its promise as the Country's premiere entertainment exhibit. Come and discover Plasma Pleasures by Automatic Centre at the Greenhills Shopping Center from Feb. 11 to March 6, daily from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Viagra knock-offs giving Pfizer headaches in China

THE US makers of the male impotency drug Viagra see counterfeits as a growing threat to their business and are urging authorities in major fake drug producer China to rein in the copycats, the company's CEO said Wednesday.

"The biggest issue we face is counterfeiting, much of which comes from China. This is a real threat to all of us," Henry McKinnell, chair and chief executive of pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. told AFP in an interview.

"There are some factories in China counterfeiting our medicines...in factories larger than the factory we have," he said in Bangkok on the sidelines of a conference on mental health challenges for Asian tsunami survivors.

"I think China needs to significantly step up their enforcement, both of patent rights and stopping counterfeits," he said. Pfizer is currently appealing a ruling by China's State Intellectual Property Office that revoked the China patent for Viagra after experts there reviewed complaints by more than 10 local pharmaceutical companies.

McKinnell said he met last week with a Chinese official at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland to press the case for more stringent support for patent rights and tougher crackdowns on copycat drug makers.

Pfizer's concern stretched beyond its popular Viagra to its cholesterol-lowering drug Lipitor, which was also being heavily counterfeited. John Theriault, Pfizer's vice president of global security, said millions of tablets of Viagra and other drugs were being seized through interdiction efforts in China but that the counterfeiting was on the rise.

"We get probably as much competition from counterfeiters as we do from legitimate product. There is so much money involved in counterfeit pharmaceuticals and the penalties are so light... that it's a very good crime if you're a criminal."

He also said a compounding problem was the online trafficking of restricted drugs like Valium, diet pills and Viagra and their knockoffs that have been flourishing on the Internet.

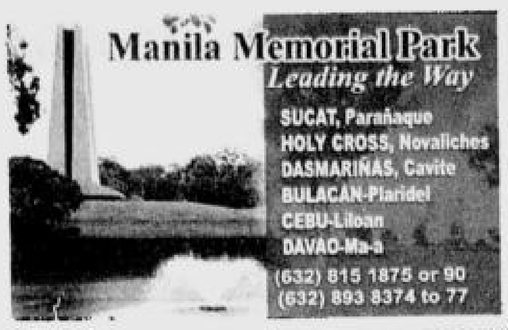
Last March, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime warned the Internet had become a haven for dealers and a headache for authorities trying to crack down on the trade in prescription and banned drugs.

2004 OUTSTANDING ONCOLOGIST OF THE YEAR

Dr. Antonio H. Villalon is 2004 Outstanding Oncologist of the year. The award is given annually by the Philippine Society of Oncologists. A cash prize was also awarded to Villalon by the Philippine Cancer Society-Dr. Lilia Borja Memorial Award. The awardee is shown 2nd from right, with, from left, Drs. Domingo E. Ganzon (PSO member, executive council), Rafael S. Claudio (PSO president), Roberto M. Paterno PhD (PCS), Nelia S. Tan-Liu (PSO secretary), Aileen Riego-Javier (chair, awards committee), and Rey H. de los Reyes (PSO president for 2004).

TIENDESITAS EN FRONTERA VERDE LAUNCHED

Tiendesitas en Frontera Verde, Asia's biggest flea market, was recently launched. Meaning 'small villages in a green frontier', Tiendesitas showcases Filipino products made by defined native manufacturers. Shown during the launching, from right, are Joey F. Santos, GM, Greenhills Shopping Center, Henry G. Babiera, CEO, Las Islas Trade and Consumer Show Organizer, and Lotta Soller, Greenhills Shopping Center.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In Loving Memory
of our Dearly Beloved

JUSTICE FILEMON H. MENDOZA, SR. (Ret.)

of Bauan, Batangas and Batangas City

Born on March 8, 1922 and Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 13, 2005 at the age of 82.

His loving wife, **Zoila**; children, **Edgar** and **Jen**, **Boy** and **Cely**, **Larry** and **Lori**, **Jun** and **Jolly**; grandchildren, **Jason** and **Jennifer**, **Apaul**, **Edgar** and **Micah**, **Edna**, **Allan** and **Charlene**, **Francis** and **Kevin**, **Tyrone** and **Zester**, **Raymund**, **Jami** and **Pijop**; and great grandson, **Malic**, request relatives and friends to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His mortal remains lie in state at the Mortuary of the Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion, Batangas City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 20, 2005 at the Roman Catholic Cemetery after the 12:00 noon Mass at the Basilica of the Immaculate Concepcion, Batangas City.

"Grieve a while for me, if grieve you must
Then let your grief be comforted by trust...
It's only for a while that we must part,
So cherish the memories within your heart..."

Dr. FERMINA RILLO MACEDA

U.P. – PGH Class 1939

Peacefully joined her husband, **Venid**, and her sons, **Boy** and **Arthur**, in the loving arms of our Creator on 16 February 2005 at the age of 88.

We ask relatives and friends, and all those whose lives have been touched by Mining's healing hands, to join us –

her children - **Nonong** & **Marilou**, and **Vic** & **Tet**, grandchildren – **Chuck** & **Charisse**, **Michelle** & **Jay Adevoso**, **Margie**, **Thea**, **Raffy**, **Aya** & **Christian Kalaw**, **Janvi** and **Mai-Mai**

in prayer for the repose of her soul.

* * *

Her body lies in state at St. John's Chapel, Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City. Necrological service is at 11 a.m. on Saturday, 19 February 2005. Cremation follows at the Eternal Gardens.

Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
Matthew 10:39

DR. DOMINGO G. AMPIL

March 23, 1914 -- February 16, 2005

*Died in the Grace of our Lord on February 16, 2005
at the age of 90.*

His loving wife **Hilaria Emiliano** and children **Paulo**, **Cita**, **Peter**, **Aida** (†), **Linda** (†), **Abet** and **Doris**, in-laws, grandchildren, great grandchildren and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will lie in state at Chapel B-5 of Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City from February 18 to 20, 2005.

CLODUALDO H. HUET
"DANDING"

*joined our Creator on 14 February 2005
at the age of 41.*

His beloved wife **Joy** and son **Jayson Dominic (Derick)**, mother **Aida**, father **Nicanor**†; parents-in-law **Bert** and **Josie**;

brothers and sisters **Ed** & **Mikay**; **Nene**, **Art** & **Cynthia**, **Ambet** & **Liza**, **Eden** & **Dennis**, **Robert** & **Madel**, **Vhok** & **Intang**, **Emy**, **Linda** & **Jess**, **Vangie** & **Rey**, **Arnel** & **Gidget** and **Tonton**, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Evergreen Memorial Park (beside Arlington Memorial Chapels, C. Raymundo St., Pasig City) on Saturday, 19 February 2005, after mass at 8:00 a.m. at Arlington Chapels, Araneta Avenue.

DEATH NOTICES

EPHRAIM LLANES

Died in the grace of our Lord on February 15, 2005 at the age of 48.
His remains lie in state at the Dulce Funeral Homes, Dinalupihan Street, Jose Abad Santos Avenue, Manila. His interment will be at the Everest Memorial Park in Munitinlupa City on February 20, 2005.

DR. ROQUE DY YUTANGCO, M.D.

Peacefully joined our Creator on February 15, 2005 at the age of 79.
His remains lie in state at the Remedios Trinidad Romualdez Medical Foundation, Calanipawan Road, Tacloban City, Leyte. Intement will be on Wednesday, February 23, 2005 at the Leyte Memorial Park after the 8:00 AM Mass.

EDGARDO INGLESA TRINIDAD

of Sta. Ana, Manila and Meralco Village, Taytay, Rizal
(Retired Meralco Employee)

*Peacefully joined our Creator
on the 15th day of February, 2005 at the age of 69.*

His bereaved wife **Leonila (Nela) Machica**; children and children-in-law: **Emer and Ancy**, **Luzvi and Willie Aranza**, **D-ward (Eduardo)**, **Lucy and Toto Guerra**, **Edwin**, **Inday (Leonor) and Lek Alfaro**, **Oyle (Lorna) and Loanne**; sisters, brother and in-laws: **Leonor and Meg Pereira**, **Lita (†) and Nardo Navarro**, **Lulu (Baby Lou) Flores and Nini (Ernesto) and Mary Ann Trinidad**; nephews, nieces, grandchildren and great grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the readers to join them in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at his residence at #18 Mark Street, Meralco Village, Taytay, Rizal.

Interment will be on February 26, 2005 (Saturday) at the Court of Eternal Love, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City after the 8:00 a.m. celebration of the Holy Mass at his residence and the 10:00 a.m. blessing at the Our Lady of the Abandoned Parish Church, Sta. Ana, Manila.

CLASSIFIEDS

DOJ Secretary Gonzalez on Iyo ang Katarungan

SECRETARY Raul Maravilla Gonzalez, one of the respected and outstanding legal minds of the House of Representatives, past and present, administers several branches of the Department of Justice appeared recently on Iyo ang Katarungan. He started his political career in 1995 when he handedly won the lone congressional seat of Iloilo City in 1995. He finished his Bachelor of Arts in University of San Agustin, a Rector Scholar and graduated LIB-Bachelor of Laws from the University of Sto. Tomas in 1995 and took the Bar Examination the same year and almost perfect the exam with a grade of 99% percent in Remedial Law and 95 percent in International Law. And now handling various agencies under the Department of Justice. He was the featured guest on Iyo ang Katarungan, last Feb. 13, over IBC 13. Interesting legal matters and other queries administering the Department of Justice were asked by Justice Presbitero Velasco Jr. (host of the show) for the televiewers for unfailingly supports Iyo ang Katarungan, which has been successfully approaching its 3rd year in television journalism.

R.A. 9048 Form No. 10.1 (LCRO)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Misamis Oriental
Municipality of Lugait
-oOo-
OFFICE OF THE LOCAL CIVIL REGISTRAR

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **WINIFREDO A. BUSTRIA** has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from **WYNNY** to **WINIFREDO** in the birth certificate of **WINIFREDO A. BUSTRIA** who was born on September 24, 1963 at **BAWO, SOGOD, CEBU** and whose parents are **GENEROSO BUSTRIA** and **VICENTA ARCILLAS**.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than February 14, 2005.

(Sgd.) **ALMA MONSANTO-CADILE**
Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI - Feb. 11 & 18, 2005)

****** *OUR COMPANY IS IN NEED OF A HIGH CALIBER CANDIDATES WHO CAN FILL UP THIS POSITION* ******

SUPERVISOR - **Business Materials planning**

Qualifications:
- Female/less than 30 years old
- A Master of Business Administration
- Preferably can speak Chinese fluently/both verbal & writing
- At least 2-5 years experience in production management
- Must have experience in Material Planning & Procurement specifically Computer Manufacturing
- Must have good communication skills
- Familiar with market information and Computer Software Application

Requirements:
- Updated resumé with recent photo, Diploma/Transcript of Records, Birth Certificate, Employment Certificate

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY SEND THEIR RESUMÉ TO:

MR. ROMMEL AQUINO
Division Chief, Recruitment Division
SHMA-Labor Center
Rm. 138, Building 255, Harryman Road
Subic Bay Freeport Zone 2222

BEDANS COME HOME - FEB.19

ASSET DISPOSAL PROJECT
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"
FOR THE SALE OF NPC TUGBOAT NO. 2 & 3
DATE OF BIDDING: March 10, 2005

The National Power Corporation will receive sealed bids on an "AS IS WHERE IS" basis for the assets described below

ITEM DESCRIPTION		Min. Bid Price
LOT 1: One (1) unit Unused Tugboat, 3000 PS (Tugboat No. 3)		**P34,816,500.00**
Length (Overall, without rubber fender/sheal)	33.30 meter (approx.)	
Breadth (molded)	9.20 meter	
Depth (molded)	3.90 meter	
Designed Load Draught (molded)	2.90 meter	
Gross Tonnage (international)	310.00 tons	
Loading Capacity	80.00 tons (approx.)	
MAIN DIESEL ENGINES		
Make	Mitsubishi	
No. of Units	2 units	
No. of Cylinder	6 cylinders	
Max. Continuous Output	1500 PS @ 1150 rpm	
Normal Output	1350 PS @ 1110 rpm	
Acquired	1998	
Location	Naga, Cebu	
LOT 2: One (1) unit Tugboat (Tugboat No. 2)		**P34,896,105.00**
Length (Overall)	30.40 meters	
Beam (Molded)	7.40 meters	
Draft Maximum	2.30 meters	
Gross Tonnage	180 tons	
Main Diesel Engine, 2 Units	Detroit 16V-92N 620 PS @ 1,800 RPM	
Generator Engine, 2 Units	Detroit, Type 4-71N 70KW @ 1,800 RPM	
Rated Output	1,200 HP	
Manufacturer	President Marine	
Date Manufactured	1994	
Location	Naga, Cebu	

Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Five Thousand Pesos (PhP 5,000.00)** at the Materials Management Department office, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidders' representatives at 10:00 AM on March 10, 2005 at the NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond (Cash or Manager's Check only) of not less than ten percent (10%) of the total amount of bid. The Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation have concurred with the bidding process and clearance for the disposal was duly approved.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any required informality, and to accept such bids that is more advantageous to the Government.

Issuance of bidding documents is on **February 17, 2005 to March 7, 2005**. A Pre-bid conference will be conducted at 2:00 PM on March 7, 2005 at the Pahiyas Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Additional information may be obtained from Asset Disposal Project office at telephone nos. 922-3870, and 921-3541 loc. 5582, or e-mail us at *lcarabelo@napocor.gov.ph*.

(Sgd.) LEVI C. ARABELO
Chairman, Task Force for the Disposal of Tugboats 2 & 3

Note: This advertisement is also posted in our website: htpp://www.napocor.gov.ph
(PDI - Feb. 18, 19 & 21, 2005)

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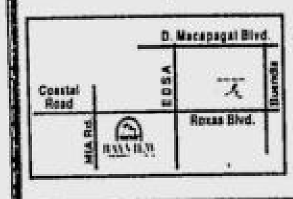

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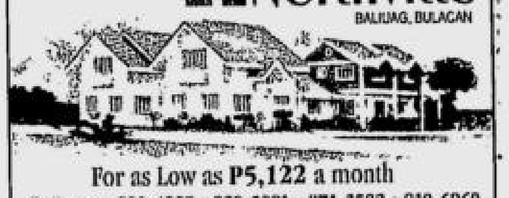

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National Power Corporation

POSITIONS FOR IMMEDIATE FILLING-UP

One (1) **SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT FOR OPERATIONS** (Item No. 090-1001)
Assumes accountability to the President and Chief Executive Officer for the day-to-day decisions relating to generation, missionary electrification, technical & maintenance services & corporate services functions of the corporation

One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR LUZON GENERATION** (Item No. 100-1001)
One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR VISAYAS GENERATION** (Item No. 110-1001)
One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR MINDANAO GENERATION** (Item No. 120-1001)
One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR SMALL POWER UTILITIES GROUP** (Item No. 130-1001)
One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR TECHNICAL & MAINTENANCE SERVICES** (Item No. 140-1001)
One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR SALES & SERVICES** (Item No. 030-1001)
Assists the President & CEO and Senior Vice President in formulating policies and guidelines for the implementation of their respective functional unit's plans and programs; participates in formulating and administering corporate policies and developing long range goals and objectives specifically in areas related to generation, missionary electrification, technical & maintenance services and corporate services

One (1) **GENERAL COUNSEL for the OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL** (Item No. 050-1001)
Responsible for ensuring that the operations of all company's business comply with laws and other prevalent regulatory provisions; Evaluate proposals, action plans and other situations that may have legal impact and determine pertinent course of action as required; May also be in charge of the judicial process of company business in different fields of law; Handles all legal matters connected with and/or arising from the operation of the Corporation and all court cases involving all eminent domain cases, land registration cases, claims for sums of money or damages, action on labor and other civil, criminal, administration proceedings including special civil actions and special proceedings

One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION** (Item No. 070-1001)
Formulates and recommends policies, guidelines, systems and procedures pertaining to Human Resource Management, Training and Development, Corporate Security and Safety, Physical Resources/Buildings and Grounds Administration with emphasis on improving productivity, quality of work life, personnel satisfaction, development and other HR and Administrative related matters

One (1) **VICE PRESIDENT FOR LOGISTICS** (Item No. 080-1001)
Directs, manages and integrates materials and fuel management to ensure the reliable and efficient processing of all fuel, materials, equipment, spare parts and supply needs of NPC plants, SPUG and other NPC office/stations

One (1) **SENIOR DEPARTMENT MANAGER FOR CORPORATE PLANNING** (Item No. 060-1001)
One (1) **SENIOR DEPARTMENT MANAGER FOR HR & ADMIN** (Item No. 071-1001)
One (1) **SENIOR DEPARTMENT MANAGER FOR FINANCE** (Item No. 040-1001)
Directs and coordinates, through the Division Manager, departmental activities and functions under their respective area of responsibility within the sphere of department functions, corporate policies, standards & practices; reviews and analyzes reports, records & directives and confers with the Division Manager Supervisory personnel to obtain data required for planning the activities and objectives of the department, ie KRA, TQM efforts, progress & monitor reports & problems encountered

All interested applicants MUST possess the necessary Bachelor's Degree relevant to the job, have at least 4 years management and supervision experience and at least 24 hours of training in management and supervision, and possess the appropriate government license and Civil Service Eligibility (i.e. Career Executive Service/Career Service Executive)

Comprehensive CV must be submitted on or before February 24, 2005 to THE MANAGER, Human Resource Management Department, 3rd Floor, Building. 1, Quezon Avenue cor. BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

(PDI - Feb 18, 2005)

AUCTION

www.henrybutcher.com

SALE BY PUBLIC AUCTION

At.: Henry Butcher Auction Center - Hilon Cmpd., Bo. Mayapa, Canlubang, Laguna
ON: TUESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2005 - 10:30AM SHARP

MOTOR VEHICLES; GENERATING SETS; POWER TOOLS/HAND TOOLS; OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT; ELECTRICALS; WOODWORK MACHINERY; MISCELLANEOUS, ETC.

MOTOR VEHICLES - FORD F150 Pick-Up (2000), (3) F150 (1999); FORD RANGER (2000); TOYOTA 2000 Model Hi-Ace Van; MITSUBISHI Owner Type Jeep; BOMBARDIER Rotax Powered Jet Ski
GENERATING SETS - DENYO 45 & 25 kva Quiet Type Generator; SHIN KOBE 7.8 kva Air cooled Diesel Generator; SHIN KOBE 6 kva Air Cooled Diesel Generator
POWER TOOLS / HAND TOOLS - MAKINA Steel Cut-Off Machines; MAKINA Routers; MAKITA Drill & Grinder Sets; BLACK & DECKER Electric Drills; HITACHI Disc Grinders; BALDWIN Pipe Threaders; Bolt Cutters; SATO Combination Wrench Sets; Socket Wrench Sets; Vice Grips; Plier Sets; Bar Bending Machine; Pedestal Drills; Hydraulic Pipe Benders; Hydraulic Body Frame Repair Kits; Automatic Tire Changer
OFFICE FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT - LUXUS Swivel Chairs; Guest Chairs; Wooden Office Tables; 4-Drawer Steel Filing Cabinets; Lateral Filing Cabinets; Mobile Pedestal Drawers; Steel Lockers; Safety Vaults; Asstd. Wooden Cabinets; Pentium 4 & 3 Computer Sets; Printers; Steel Rackings
WOODWORK MACHINERY - 12-Spindle Drive Bottom Boring; G-Spindle Drilling Machine; Angle Saw Cutter; 2-Shaft Drive Saw; Glue Roller Machine; Single-Blade Plywood Saw; Circular Saw
ELECTRICALS - GE 2000/1600 Amps Main Distribution Panels w/ Branches; MITSUBISHI WF-800 Circuit Breakers; Contactors; Asstd. Transformers; Welding Wires; High Tension Insulators; Fluorescent Lamps; Communication Cables;
MISCELLANEOUS - Digital Computing Weighing Scales; Portable Stoves; Gas Rangers; TEW Hand Driers; Cue Balls; Door Knobs; GI Fittings; Industrial Blowers; Security Camera Housing; Air Compressors; 3-Door Chillers, Satellite Disc; AHIBA Turbo Color Scientific Instrument; 2" Gate Valves; NIKON COOLPIX 950 Digital Camera; TIMEX 1440 Digital Sport Watch Chrono; SONY Playstation

On View: Monday 21st February 2005 - 9am to 5pm & morning of sale day
Refundable Deposit: Php20,000 (upon registration)
Please bring valid ID to be presented during registration
For further information please contact Carol Cosca at Tel: 049 834 6541
Email: carol.cosca@henrybutcher.com

GoIndustry Henry Butcher
INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL AND VALUATION

HENRY BUTCHER INTERNATIONAL PHILIPPINES INC
Rm 102 Jolliland Bldg., 670 Edsa, Pasay City, Philippines
Tel No +(63-2) 852 2910 * 11 Fax No +(63 2) 831-4507
E mail manila@henrybutcher.com
Website www.henrybutcher.com www.goindustry.com

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region IX – Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 991-1828, (062) 9911789, Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites all interested Trucking/Hauling Operators, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Trucking/Hauling of 2005 NFA imported/local rice and/or local palay at the following area to wit:

(Province/Port)	Estimated Volume (in bags of 50 kg) for Transfer within the Province	Approved Rate per Bag 50 kg (P) per Trip	Approved Budget (P)
1. City Port to Tiguma Whse., Pagadian City	145,000	6.00	870,000.00
2. Pagadian City Wharf to Molave Warehouse	45,000	20.00	900,000.00
3. Pagadian Whse. to San Miguel PSC Whse	10,000	15.00	150,000.00
4. Palid Wharf to Taway GID Whse. Ipil	90,000	5.25	472,500.00
5. Guilawa Warehouse to Taway Whse	10,000	20.00	200,000.00
6. NFA Zambo City Whse. to Taway Whse	5,000	26.00	130,000.00
7. Malangas Wharf to Guilawa Warehouse	20,000	5.50	110,000.00
8. Liloy Lamao Port to Ipil Taway Warehouse	50,000	14.25	712,500.00
9. Pulawan Port to Gulayon Warehouse	115,000	7.00	805,000.00
10. Port Sta. Maria to Lituban Whse., Siocon	30,000	8.00	240,000.00
11. Lamao Port to Banigan Warehouse, Liloy	50,000	4.75	237,500.00
12. Gulayon Warehouse to Banigan Whse.	10,000	19.50	195,000.00
13. Gulayon Warehouse to S. Osmeña Whse.	5,000	15.00	75,000.00
14. Banigan Warehouse to Taway Warehouse	10,000	14.25	142,500.00
15. Port to Fortune Whse., Zamboanga City/ vice versa	1,300,000	2.75	3,575,000.00

The hauling activity (subject to bidding) calls for the supply of cargo/hauling trucks:

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
• Last day of application for registration/renewal to interested bidders who are not NFA accredited labor contractors and/or whose registration had already expired	February 23, 2005 / 8 AM - 4 PM
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & issuance of bid forms	February 14-18 & 21-25, 2005
• Pre-Bid Conference	March 1, 2005 / 9:00 AM
• Submission and opening of bids	March 14, 2005 / 9:00 AM

All hauling/trucking operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/ accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00 to NFA-BAC, Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated above.

The venue of Pre-Bid Conference and Bidding Proper will be at NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City.

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security, bidding procedures and evaluation shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA**
OIC Office of ARD, and
Chairman, RBAC

(PDI – February 11 & 18, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region IX – Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 991-1828, (062) 9911789, Fax No. (062) 9911339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA) invites all interested Labor Contractors, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the in-warehouse handling of NFA 2005 imported/local rice and/or local palay at the following area to wit:

(Province/Port)	Estimated Volume (In bags of (50 kg)	Approved Rate per Bag 50 kg (P)	Approved Budget (P)
1. Tiguma GID Warehouse, Pagadian City	348,500	1.75	609,875.00
2. Culo GID Warehouse, Molave, ZDS	106,500	1.75	186,375.00
3. Taway GID Warehouse, Ipil, Sibugay	208,700	1.75	365,225.00
4. Guilawa Warehouse, Malangas, Sibugay	52,300	1.75	91,525.00
5. Fortune Warehouse, Zamboanga City	2,215,000.00	1.70	3,765,500.00
6. Gulayon Warehouse, Dipolog City	242,000	1.75	423,500.00
7. Lituban Warehouse, Siocon, ZDN	63,000	1.75	10,250.00
8. FSC Warehouse, S. Osmeña, ZDN	10,000	1.75	17,500.00
9. Banigan FSC Warehouse, Liloy, ZDN	100,000	1.75	175,000.00

* In warehouse handling for intra-inter regional transfers/distribution.

The in-warehouse handling activity (subject to bidding) calls for the supply of labor services only.

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
• Last day of application for registration/renewal to interested bidders who are not NFA accredited labor contractors and/or whose registration had already expired	February 23, 2005 / 8 AM - 4 PM
• Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & issuance of bid forms	February 14-18 & 21-25, 2005
• Pre-Bid Conference	March 1, 2005 /2:00 PM
• Submission and opening of bids	March 14, 2005 / 2:00 PM

All labor contractors nterested to participate in the bidding must be registered/ accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent to participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 3,500.00 to NFA-BAC, Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated above.

The venue of Pre-Bid Conference and Bidding Proper will be at the NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City.

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security, bidding procedures and evaluation shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA**
OIC Office of ARD, and
Chairman, RBAC

(PDI – February 11 & 18, 2005)

WHERE YOU FIND THE BEST. *Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer and visit it online at www.jobmarketonline.com*

ASSET DISPOSAL PROJECT
NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID

"AS-IS-WHERE-IS"

FUEL TANK BARGE "T-228"

DATE OF BIDDING: 10:00 AM / MARCH 10, 2005

The National Power Corporation will receive sealed bids on an "AS-IS-WHERE-IS" basis for the sale of the asset described below:

ITEM / DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	MINIMUM BID PRICE
Lot 1 - One (1) Unit, FUEL BARGE (Non-propelled), "T-228" Material of Hull : Steel Length Overall (LOA) : 82.00 meters Length between Perpendiculars (LWL) : 81.26 meters Breadth (Molded) : 25.26 meters Number of Deck : Single Gross Tonnage (Approx) : 2,610 tons Net Tonnage (Approx) : 2,591 tons Fuel Barge Capacity : 40,000 barrels Date Launched : July 17, 1993 Shipbuilder Hull No. : 63	Batangas Coal-Fired Thermal Power Plant, Calaca, Batangas	P26,968,500.00

Interested eligible bidders may obtain bidding documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Two Thousand Pesos (PhP2,000.00)** at the Materials Management Department office, Ground Floor, Building No. 1, National Power Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines.

Bids will be opened in the presence of bidder's representatives at **10:00 a.m. on March 10, 2005** at the Kañao Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Bond (Cash or Manager's Check only) of not less than ten percent (10%) of the total amount of bid. The Power Sector Asset and Liabilities Management (PSALM) Corporation have concurred with the bidding process and clearance for the disposal was duly approved.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any informality, and to accept such bids as may be deemed most advantageous to the Government.

Issuance of bidding documents is on **February 17, 2005 to March 7, 2005.** A Pre-bid conference will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on March 7, 2005 at the Pahiyas Room, NPC Solarium, NPC Head Office. For additional information, please call Asset Disposal Project at telephone nos. 922-3970, and 921-3541 loc. 5582, or e-mail us at lcarabelo@napocor.gov.ph.

(Sgd.) **LEVI C. ARABELO**
Chairman, Task Force on the Disposal of Fuel Barge

Note: This advertisement is also posted on our website: htpp://www.napocor.gov.ph

(PDI - Feb. 18, 19 & 21, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region IX - Western Mindanao, Zamboanga City
Tel. Nos. (062) 991-1828, (062) 991-1789
Fax No. (062) 991-1339

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)** invites all interested Cargo Handling Operators, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the discharging of 2005 NFA imported rice on board foreign/local vessels at the following area/port to wit:

(Province/Port)	Estimated Volume (in bags of 50 kg)	Approved Rate per Bag 50 kg (P)	Approved Budget (P)
1. Pagadian City Port	200,000	2.6565	531,300.00
2. Malangas Wharf	20,000	3.00	60,000.00
3. Pulawan Port, Dapitan City	120,000	3.325	399,000.00
4. Port Sta. Maria, Siocon, ZDN	30,000		
5. Lamao Port, Liloy, ZDN	50,000		
6. Zambo City Port (imported rice)	1,500,000	7.24	9,412,000.00
7. Zambo. City Port (domestic shipment)	710,000	3.982	2,827,220.00

The cargo handling activity (subject to bidding) calls for the supply of labor, cargo handling logistics including supervision in the complete execution of the discharging operations.

Schedule of bidding activities:

Particulars	Date/Time
- Last day of application for registration/renewal to interested bidders who are not NFA accredited labor contractors and/or whose registration had already expired	February 23, 2005 8AM - 4PM
- Issuance of application forms for eligibility and list of eligibility requirements, submission of Letter of Intent & issuance of bid forms	February 14-18 & 21-25, 2005
- Pre-Bid Conference	March 2, 2005 / 2:00 PM
- Submission and opening of bids	March 15, 2005 / 2:00 PM

All cargo handling operators interested to participate in the bidding must be registered/accredited with NFA. Application forms for eligibility to bid, list of eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be issued upon submission of Letter of Intent participate and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 5,000.00 to NFA-BAC, Zamboanga City on the scheduled date and time stated above.

The venue of Pre-Bid Conference and Bidding Proper will be at NFA Conference Room, Gov. Ramos Ave., San Roque, Zamboanga City.

All particulars relative to Bid Security, Performance Security, bidding procedures and evaluation shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its IRR-A, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and as provided in the Instruction to Bidders.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO M. MARAVILLA**
OIC-Office of ARD, and
Chairman, RBAC

(PDI- Feb. 11 & 18, 2005)

For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:

HEAD OFFICE:
897-8808
loc. 514, 516;
899-4425; 897-2535;
897-8425 (Telefax)

CUBAO:
912-9008 to 11
(Aurora)

MAKATI:
892-5578; 811-4361;
811-4370

KALAW:
528-0213; 527-3342

MEGAMALL:
635-0219; 635-0220

BAGUIO WATER DISTRICT
WE SERVE

INVITATION FOR ACCREDITATION/ RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

(for the year 2005)

The Baguio Water District is inviting all interested and qualified suppliers, traders, manufacturers and dealers to be accredited or have their accreditation renewed with the Baguio Water District for the supply of the following:

1. Pumps and motors
   - centrifugal booster pumps, submersible turbine pumps
   - horizontal induction motors/submersible motors (5-150 HP), etc.
2. Pipes and pipes fittings as HDPE, Pb. G1, B1, Brass fittings, O-rings, etc.
3. Chemicals
4. Motor controls and other electro-mechanical parts and accessories
5. Construction materials
6. Vehicle, vehicle parts, lubricants
7. Water meters
8. Office supplies and computers

Interested parties are requested to secure the accreditation forms from the purchasing office of the Baguio Water District, BWD compound, Baguio City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of five hundred pesos (P500.00) from 28 February 2005 to 4 March 2005.

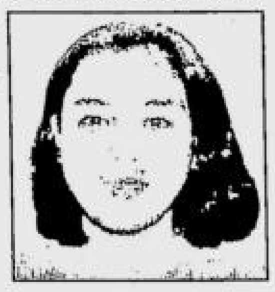
Thank you.

BWD BAC-In house

(PDI - Feb 18 & 19, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Be it known that there is an outstanding warrant of arrest for **Ms. Mary Ann Castaneda Guillermo** of No. 14R Roads, First West Crame, San Juan, Metro Manila and with provincial address at Galaxy Apartments, Datu Piang St., Koronadal, South Cotabato, whose picture appears below, that was issued by the Regional Trial Court, 11th Judicial Region, Branch 25, City of Koronadal, South Cotabato in Criminal Cases Nos. 5725-31 for Qualified Theft.



Please direct any information leading to her arrest or whereabouts to:

MR. FRANCISCO BACIERTO, JR.
Equitable PCI Tower I,
corner de la Costa and
Makati Avenue, Makati City
Telephone Nos. 8784425 or 8407625

(PDI—Feb. 18, 2005)

LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB No. 02-027-05

The Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) hereby invites interested bidders/proponents to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

CONTRACT FOR THE EXCLUSIVE CONCESSION RIGHTS ON ALL THE STRUCTURAL AREAS/SPACES FOR THE MARKETING, INSTALLATION, MAINTENANCE AND DISMANTLING OF ADVERTISING COMMERCIAL MEDIUM COVERING THE LRT LINE 1 AND 2 SYSTEMS.

The pre-qualification/eligibility forms and Bid Documents may be secured from the LRTA Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat at the Ground Floor, Administration Bldg., LRTA Compound, Aurora Blvd., Pasay City, Metro Manila, during regular office hours from **March 1 - 4, 2005** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00).**

Site inspection will be held on **March 14-15, 2005.** For the purpose of clarifying issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **March 22, 2005, Tuesday, 10:30 a.m.**, at the above address.

The BAC Secretariat shall receive sealed bids not later than **March 31, 2005, Thursday, 9:00 a.m.** and shall then be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

LRTA reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of its bids, and will entertain only such bid/s established to be the most advantageous to the LRTA.

(Sgd.) **LT COL CESAR B CHAVEZ (GSC) - MNSA**
Deputy Administrator
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - Feb. 18, 2005)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN LUZON
164 13th Street, Port Area, Manila
Tel (02) 301-9576 to 82, Fax (02) 301-9579

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TO BID

All interested parties are invited to apply for pre-qualification and, if pre-qualified to bid for the provision of

CARGO HANDLING SERVICES
at the following ports:

Port/s	Location	Minimum Paid-Up Capital
1. Port of Sta. Cruz	Marinduque	P 250,000.00
2. Port of Romblon	Romblon	P 500,000.00
3. Port of Poctoy (Odiongan)	Romblon	P 1,000,000.00
4. Port of San Jose	Occidental Mindoro	P 2,000,000.00
5. Port of Cuyo	Cuyo, Palawan	P 500,000.00

Issuance of Pre-qualification documents	February 28, 2005 March 1-11, 2005
Submission of Pre-qualification documents	March 28, 2005, Not later than 3:00 PM

Pre-qualification documents for each port may be secured upon presentation of Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable amount of P1,100.00 at the Port District of Southern Luzon at the above address. Bid documents shall be issued only to pre-qualified firms upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P5,500.00.

Pre-qualified firms shall be informed of the date and time of Pre-bid Conference and submission and opening of bids in the Notice of Pre-qualification. The venue for all activities shall be at the Port District of Southern Luzon.

The Philippine Port Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereat, waive any defect or informality therein and to accept the bids most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) **HECTOR E. MIOLE**
Port District Manager

(PDI - Feb. 18 & 25, 2005)

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
G/F MWSI Bldg., MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines 1100
Tel. Nos. 435-33-66, 920-5521 loc. 3500, 3615, 3616

INVITATION TO BID

The Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is inviting interested and qualified suppliers to participate in the electronic bidding for the supply and staggered delivery of:

Minimum Quantity	Description
27,000 MT	LIQUID ALUMINUM SULFATE

with annual requirements as follows:

1. 17,500 MT-for La Mesa Treatment Plant No. 1
2. 9,500 MT - for La Mesa Treatment Plant No. 2

As per MWSI Technical Specification (Section 32100) & E-Bid Terms and Conditions.

Interested Bidders may, beginning FEBRUARY 18, 2005 up to FEBRUARY 23, 2005, obtain further information and secure a complete set of pre-qualification forms, technical specifications and terms and conditions for a non-refundable participating fee of P3,000.00.

The Electronic Bidding is scheduled on March 10, 2005, Thursday, 2.00 P.M., at Bayan Trade Office (#24/F IBM Plaza, Eastwood City Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez, Jr. Ave., Libis, Quezon City).

For further information, please contact the Manager, Purchasing Department at the following address and telephone numbers:

The Purchasing Department,
MWSS Compound, MWSI Office
Basement, Katipunan Road,
Old Balara, Quezon City
Tel. No. 435-33-66
Fax No. 923-23-03 / 433-5629

(Sgd.) **IGNACIO B. GIMENEZ**
SAVP, Corporate Logistics

(PDI - Feb 18 & 19, 2005)

BUSINESS

Tax experts warn against VAT increase

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S top corporate tax experts are not in favor of indiscriminately raising the value-added tax to 12 percent, saying a universal increase in VAT will contradict the principle of progressive taxation.

The Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP)—composed of corporate auditors, lawyers and executives—said the government could raise the VAT rate, but should not cover goods and services regularly purchased by low- and middle-income earners.

"Since VAT is an indirect tax, it will be passed on to the ultimate consumers, without regard to the consumers' ability to pay," the TMAP said in a position paper. "The passing on of the VAT would be contradictory to the principle of imposing taxes based on the taxpayers' ability to pay."

The TMAP also warned the government that raising the VAT rate from 10 to 12 percent might adversely affect the income of industries that do not produce basic goods and services because a higher tax could reduce demand. Therefore, the increase in the VAT rate will not necessarily mean higher tax collection, the TMAP said.

The organization suggested that the government take a second look at the revenue impact of the VAT hike proposal, noting that the additional 2-percentage point in the VAT rate might discourage consumers from buying non-essential products and services.

The TMAP also said that instead of imposing a 10- or 12-percent VAT on products and services that are currently VAT-exempt, the government should just impose lower VAT rates on them.

"It should be borne in mind that the exemptions were granted to the transactions for a certain reason or policy," the TMAP said. "These reasons or policies should be reviewed carefully before the VAT exemptions be withdrawn."

Aside from raising the VAT rate, the Arroyo administration is also pushing for the removal of the VAT exemption of the following transactions: sale or importation of coal, natural gas and petroleum products; sale or importation of raw materials used in the manufacture of petroleum products; sale, importation, printing and publication of books; and services rendered by lawyers and doctors.

The Arroyo administration is lobbying for the increase in VAT rate and removal of exemptions to improve the government's revenue collection. The proposal to raise VAT to 12 percent is expected to generate P35 billion in additional annual revenue, while the VAT-exemption withdrawal is estimated to result in P28 billion in incremental yearly revenues.

The Department of Finance, which is leading the Arroyo economic team in lobbying for the legislation of the VAT hike and other tax proposals, has said that increasing the VAT rate is not anti-poor, contrary to what critics are saying. The DOF believes that since VAT is a consumption tax, people who do not consume much will not be significantly affected by the rate increase.

BRITTANY REVEALS THE SECRET OF COURTYARDS OF PORTOFINO

Maverick property developer Brittany Corporation, unveils the secret of the enchanting charm of courtyards with new model homes at Courtyards of Portofino. This is the latest evolution of Portofino in Alabang.

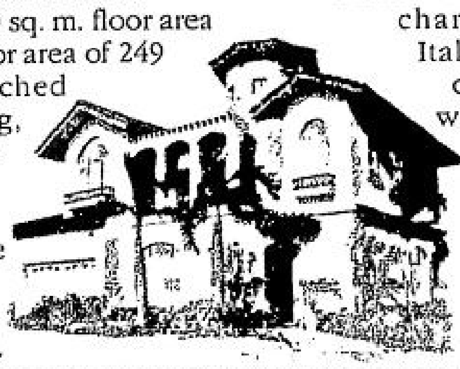
Rooted in history, the courtyard home was prescribed by the philosopher Socrates as having a section of the home designed to let in the sun. The courtyard provides an open area for enjoying starry nights or sunny days from inside the home.

This masterpiece in home architecture is a distinctive concept that's clearly seen in the Courtyards model homes: Rembrandt, with a 260 sq. m. floor area and Raphael with a floor area of 249 sq. m. The sun-drenched colors, stone cladding, archways and cupola speak of romantic Italy. Other models available are Cezanne (193 sq. m. floor area) and Monet (233 sq. m. floor area).

Cynthia and Ivy Almario of Atelier Almario meticulously crafted the homes' interiors with the quaintly charming character of classic Italian homes. Recio + Casas designed the architecture with a striking magnificence that is distinctly Italy. Gardens thriving with lush greenery, accented by fountains, benches and cobblestone paths were artfully landscaped by Benny Velasco of FN Velasco and Jojo Lazaro of Ground Works. All were guided by the Brittany vision of creating a one-of-a-kind property with the concept of courtyards within a courtyard.

On February 20, 2005, the model homes Rembrandt and Raphael will be unveiled. Courtyards of Portofino is located only a few minutes from the Alabang business center on the Las Piñas-Muntinlupa-Laguna-Cavite Link Road.

Call 850 2868 or 850 6986 for a Property Preview.



COURTYARDS
OF
Portofino

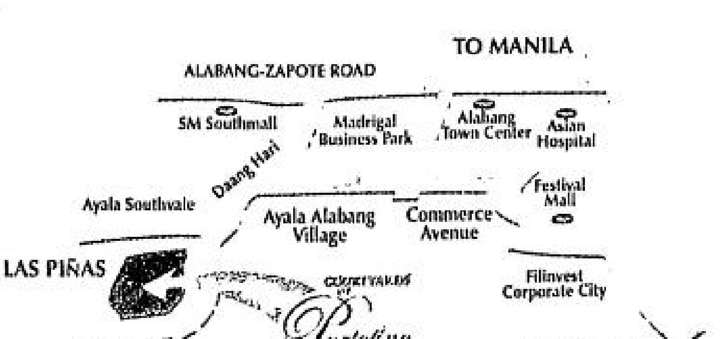
Un Segreto è All'interno

(INSIDE, A SECRET LIES IN WAIT.)

An intriguing secret is tucked inside the homes at Courtyards of Portofino...an enchanting room, where sunny skies and starry nights serve as nature's canopy; a private place for friends and family. This is your very own courtyard, and it's right inside your home.

Inspired by classic Italian design, Courtyards of Portofino brings home charming Old World archways, cupolas, vivid sun-drenched colors and best of all, quaint, uniquely Italian courtyards. Moreover, the courtyard homes surround grand courtyards across the enclave of Courtyards of Portofino.

Discover the secret, experience the enchantment of Courtyards of Portofino.
850 2868 • 850 6986 • www.brittany.com.ph



Brittany
CORPORATION

E-mail: pr_business@inquirer.com.ph

BUSINESS Friday

Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Welcome gift weaves way to helping an industry

By Emmaruth Gabriel
Contributor

THREE years ago over dinner, Baby Montemayor gave a balikbayan friend a malong scarf as a welcome home token. Little did she know that night, she would be giving the world a most colorful gift—the vibrant hues of her beloved Mindanao.

Her friend loved the gift and casually suggested she bring the malong and shawls to New York. She thought that was a good idea and kept it in the backburner.

Locally, her viscose rayon scarves and shawls have been the best kept secrets of society gals. But, something this beautiful could no longer stay in whispers and shadows.

Montemayor and Margie Moran-Floirendo produce shawls, belts, collar belts that are laboriously beaded with white and grey seed pearls, amethyst stones and crystals. They are multifunctional items that a woman can use to enhance her wardrobe.

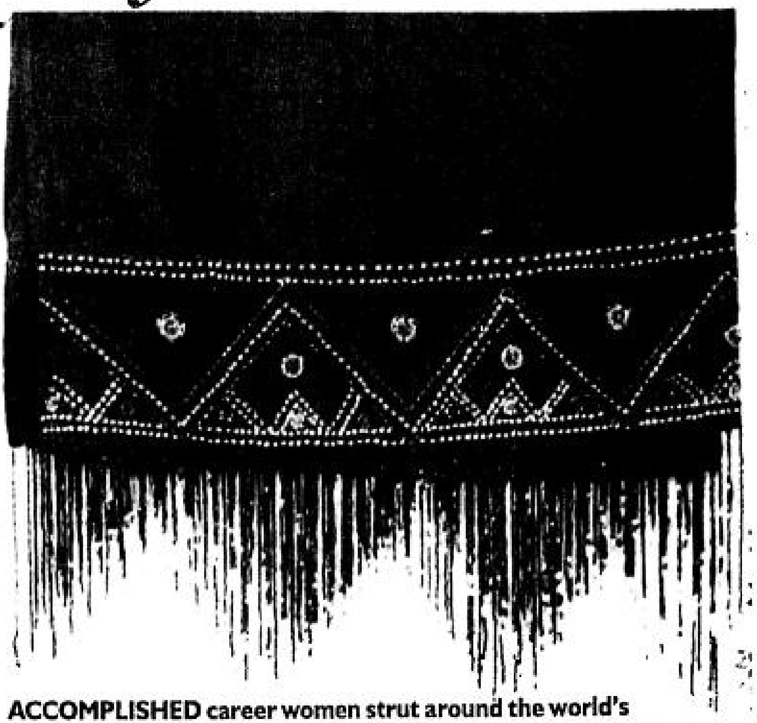
The special beading adds chintz and a sparkle of glamour to an ordinary outfit. Modern women under 25 and accomplished career women strut around the world's boardrooms and fashion zones with their colorful accessories.

In Manila, fashionistas pair their jeans and white tops with Montemayor's fully beaded color belts in Greenbelt and bohemian Orosa Street.

They sold out in the Congressional spouses' bazaar. Their second commercial pursuit, a local trade fair, was a hit. "In our first two days at the Mega Mall Trade Fair, we sold P150,000 worth of scarves," happily reports Montemayor.

Montemayor sold her scarves and shawls piecemeal to friends. By word of mouth, the exquisite designs and patters as well as intricate beadwork caught on and Montemayor teamed up with chum Moran-Floreindo and started a project.

"We treated it like a project. We didn't want foreigners to think of Mindanao as always war torn. Through the scarves, we wanted them to see something beautiful comes out of Mindanao," stresses Montemayor.



ACCOMPLISHED career women strut around the world's boardrooms and fashion zones with their accessories from Mindanao.

The called their partnership Tribes of the East to reflect the different tribes at work behind the fashion creations. "Margie and I went to the mountains of Mindanao and actually looked for these tribeswomen who weave these fabrics," says Montemayor.

Floreindo helps design, upping the value of the already expensive viscose rayon fabric by inlaying them with intricate beadwork that is classic but modern in design.

The partners found a Cotabato guide who spoke the languages of the tribal women. They found out that traditional weavers weave a yard a day. They then wait for a week or so to see if the trader that they passed on the fabrics to sold items in the public market or returned with unsold items. It was a feast or famine type of existence, with only the traders cashing in.

Another problem was convincing the elders to play around with their ethnic and traditional designs. The market Montemayor and Floreindo were catering to were sophisticated New Yorkers who wanted auburn and lime green as colors, not brown and red.

But the partners were determined to fuse traditional weaving with contemporary design. So, they enlisted the help of the tribal elders in advising them on the traditional patterns and the DTI for technical assistance in weaving techniques. They set up a weaving center for younger generations in Panabo, Davao del Norte.

"Their only capital is patience in perfecting the craft, adds Montemayor. "It will take a while before they could earn as much as the Cotabato women, but the money and hope is there."

In Cotabato, experienced weavers can finish 8 meters in five days. In their Panabo weaving center, it takes about two weeks to finish the same amount of fabric.

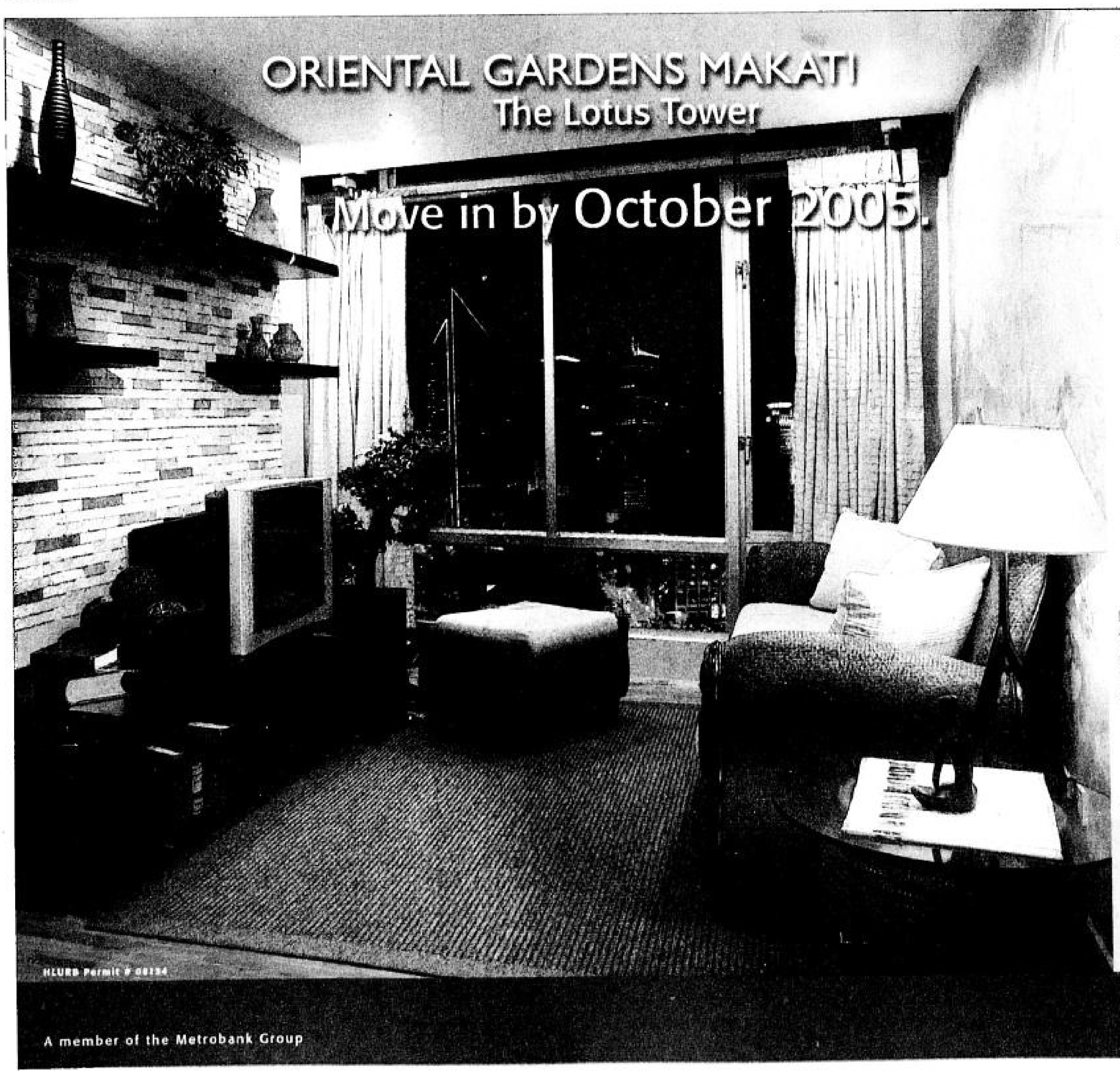
"We are educating our market and buyers that these are not mechanized. We are not that high tech. The shawls are being lovingly, carefully and wonderfully woven by these women," illustrates Montemayor.

To date, Tribes of the East maintains 12 weavers in Cotabato, a string of sub-contractors in the South, 14 weavers in Panabo and 14 beaders and sewers in Davao City.

The label on their shawls read "Made in Mindanao." Montemayor stresses that they did this deliberately. "We are trying to do what the Cebuanos did for their products." The marketing strategy seems to be working. They have now expanded to making home accessories like throw pillows and bags.

"We can't be limited to what we have for now," says Montemayor. Yet what they have isn't bad—a presence in New York, Chicago, Morocco, Florida and Australia where the scarves fetch an average $50 a pop.

Locally, high end lifestyle boutiques in the country like Firma and Ana Pashmina carry their items with reckless abandon. To the delight of their customers.



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Germany extends helping hand to RP SMEs

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

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It is this set of technical skills that the German government wants to provide local firms involved in community development through the German Development Service or DED's Strategic Corporate-Community Partnership for Local Development Program.

DED developed Scope with the Philippine Business for Social Progress to help Filipino companies involved in making communities' lives better to do more, and to encourage other firms to do the same.

DED, for instance, tied up with the Figaro coffee chain to help train five coffee farmer cooperatives in the Cordilleras in organic coffee cultivation, as part of Figaro's goal to eventually sell a line of certified organic coffee here and abroad.

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This exec is bullish about RP

EVEN with so many challenges and threats to the Philippines' future, Ambassador John K.C. Ng is still optimistic on the country's economic prospects.

"Now, more than ever, is the right time to invest in the future of the country. I think that in the next few years, industries such as real estate, mining, IT and tourism will boom. These will then lead the way for other industries, which will bode well for us," he said.

He explained the country's growing and young population bodes well for the continued growth of the housing sector as well as a rise in occupancy rates for the tourism industry. With many educated Filipinos fluent in English and computer-literate, they provide a constant influx of valuable human resources and skills crucial to the further growth of the information technology (IT) and business process outsourcing (BPO) industries in the Philippines. And once they have the training and skills, IT-savvy Filipinos can then seek opportunities abroad. The growth of these important economic sectors will then make ripples in other industries, among them construction and real estate.

Ambassador Ng even dismissed the threats that the continued economic boom of China bodes for the country. "Whether we like it or not China will become the next economic superpower," he said. Thus, instead of producing textile, toys and similar mass produced goods where China has a definite cost advantage, the best thing for the Philippines to do is to "learn and search for ways on how we can benefit from their economic expansion."

As examples, he cited the voracious appetite of China for minerals to support the further development of its infrastructure, and the need for Chinese nationals to learn to speak English fluently. Since we have an abundant supply of minerals and good schools, the Philippines must exploit these advantages for its benefit, he stated.

The ambassador also noted that the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court that allows foreign investors to tap the country's rich mineral resources is a step forward in the right direction. "We should look at it in a positive manner: Filipinos will get jobs, our exports will grow, dollars will pour in, and industries related to mining will grow as well."

The biggest opportunity, however, that Ambassador Ng projects is in tourism. He estimated that in 10 years, 100 million mainland Chinese will travel abroad annually for week-long holidays and vacations. "If we can tap just 5 percent of the 100 million, you can just imagine how this will double, perhaps even triple our current tourist arrivals and bring in revenue for the hotels and resorts all over the country," he surmised. Thus, he is pushing our national airlines for direct flights from the cold northern Chinese cities of Beijing, Tianjin, Dalian, and Shenyang to Cebu, Davao, and Boracay for the Philippines to capture this golden opportunity.

With his strong links to both Filipino-Chinese and mainland Chinese businessmen, Ng was recently appointed as Presidential Envoy for Chinese Affairs. His personal commitment to President Macapagal Arroyo and the Filipino people is to bring in more mainland Chinese investors and tourists to the country. As the immediate past president of the Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he led the organization in its philanthropic efforts, including the construction of hundreds of school buildings in underprivileged barangays all over the country. He proudly stated that the chamber was able to construct the buildings at half the cost that the Department of Public Works and Highways incurs. As these school buildings enable more and more school children to finish their studies, he hoped that this "will be our legacy to the future generation."

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Corporate Social Marketing: Doing business with a soul

By Karen V. de Asis
Contributor

THE CONCEPT of Corporate Social Marketing (CSM), others call the Societal Marketing Concept (SMC), first emerged in the early '70s. In a seminal article written in 1972 at the Harvard Business Review by marketing guru Philip Kotler, he argued that in addition to the basic elements of the marketing concept that included customer satisfaction and profitability, one must add public concern or what he referred to as "long-run consumer welfare."

While Kotler was credited for helping acknowledge the importance of a social and ethical agenda in marketing, his original definition did not challenge businesses to deviate from a purely profit-seeking, self-interest mindset. In fact, there was subtle urging to engage in social marketing activities mainly to further promote business interests and its lifecycle.

'Enlightened marketer'

According to Kotler, "The enlightened marketer attempts to satisfy the consumer and enhance his total well-being on the theory that what is good in the long run for consumers is good for business. He is asked to do this not only to meet his social responsibilities but also because failure to do so may hurt his long-run interests as a producer."

Despite the absence of true altruism and a moral shortcoming in the original understanding of CSM, the number of CSM activities steadily rose over the last three decades triggered primarily, by advocacy and civic groups that decried excessive and abusive consumption; secondarily, by a growing number of businesses that emphasized sustainable growth while integrating ethical and societal interests; and thirdly, by a steady shift in consumer behavior toward product and services perceived to do societal good.

CSM as defined by Drumwright and Murphy evolved to "encompass marketing initiatives that have at least one non-economic objective related to social welfare and use the resources of the company and/or one of its partners."

Also, over time, the practice of CSM has gone beyond short-term charity projects to sustained global corporate philanthropy and intrinsic design in the marketing offer.

Studies of brands that have become icons of the CSM model reveal the following similarities in their marketing and business strategy:

One, CSM brands are driven by people and leadership fueled by passion for community or social causes rather than individual self-interest and business greed. Body Shop is a natural skin and body care retailer operating in 50 countries with over 1,900 outlets. A message by its founder, Dame Anita Roddick, reveals the company's business and marketing mission. "We use our stores and our products to help communicate human rights and environmental causes."

Thus, Body Shop has consistently espoused causes against animal testing while advocating community trade, human rights and environmental protection. Body Shop has successfully merged the business and advocacy model in a community trade program where the company deals with small producer communities worldwide. These include the Amazonian Indian tribes raising Brazil nuts, the Chepang indigenous people growing herbs for Body Shop's Ayurvedic product line and the Nicaraguan farmers supplying sesame seed oil.

Two, the cause is intrinsically designed in the product or service offer. Grameen Bank in Bangladesh was organized in 1976 to offer micro-credit to the poorest of the poor without collateral. Today, Grameen Bank is the world's financial model for micro-finance. Its model has been applied to projects in 58 countries in the United States, Europe, the Netherlands and Norway.

Presently, Grameen Bank serves the needs of 46,000 villages in Bangladesh with 1,267 branches. It has lent more than $4.5 billion in small loans of $12 to $15 to entrepreneurial women producing goods from their homes. The bank has even lent to beggars. Grameen Bank has over 3.7 million borrowers, 96 percent of whom are women with a 98 percent repayment and a recovery rate higher than any other banking system.

Noble cause and mission

Another is mail-order organic fashion People Tree, a pioneer in fair trade and ecology fashion that sells garments, underwear, and bed linen made from organic cotton. Organic fashion includes clothes produced without chemicals or fertilizers. In this case, organic cotton is grown using natural farming and production methods while providing traditional skilled farmers, artisans and workers a sustained livelihood and income based on fair or higher-than-market wages and buying prices.

Three, CSM brands due largely to its noble cause and mission, create new segments in otherwise mainstream markets while likewise, becoming highly differentiated and innovative in their category. Body Shop for natural-based personal care products, People Tree organic clothing representing ecology fashion and Grameen Bank for micro-finance and banking are but just a few notable examples.

Four, CSM brands engage in global corporate philanthropy. Not all CSM brands were born with a cause. Today, more and more mainstream brands are engaging in at least one major, sustained CSM activity that is globally implemented.

One example is Ronald McDonald House Charities. The first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1974. The House was named after the brand mascot whom kids worldwide love and look up to as a symbol of happiness. Ronald McDonald Houses are temporary residences located near hospitals for families of children requiring longtime in-hospital treatment.

In these houses, families can eat, sleep and form support groups with other families in the same crisis situation. Resident families make a donation of $5 to $20 a day but where donations are not possible, their stay remain free. Today, there are 240 Ronald McDonald Houses in 25 countries while 30,000 volunteers donate one million hours of their time annually. The program has helped more than 10 million families worldwide.

Luxury watch Chopard raises money for aids and leukemia research. It also champions Alp Action, a Swiss-based charity that advocates preservation of the world's Alpine environment.

Conscious, ethical choices

CSM is indeed here to stay as more and more people; business leaders and cultures realize the value and intrinsic importance of doing business and marketing with an underlying and sustained societal and ethical cause, other than simple, pure profit. World data indicates an increasing number of consumers making socially conscious and ethical choices. More and more consumers are buying food, fashion and personal care products, among others, because they are natural-based or a percentage of the retail price goes to a favored cause.

(De Asis with email address at kdeasis@skyinet.net teaches Strategic Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional School's Graduate School of Business)

Germany extends helping hand to RP SMEs

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One, CSM brands are driven by people and leadership fueled by passion for community or social causes rather than individual self-interest and business greed. Body Shop is a natural skin and body care retailer operating in 50 countries with over 1,900 outlets. A message by its founder, Dame Anita Roddick, reveals the company's business and marketing mission. "We use our stores and our products to help communicate human rights and environmental causes."

Thus, Body Shop has consistently espoused causes against animal testing while advocating community trade, human rights and environmental protection. Body Shop has successfully merged the business and advocacy model in a community trade program where the company deals with small producer communities worldwide. These include the Amazonian Indian tribes raising Brazil nuts, the Chepang indigenous people growing herbs for Body Shop's Ayurvedic product line and the Nicaraguan farmers supplying sesame seed oil.

Two, the cause is intrinsically designed in the product or service offer. Grameen Bank in Bangladesh was organized in 1976 to offer micro-credit to the poorest of the poor without collateral. Today, Grameen Bank is the world's financial model for micro-finance. Its model has been applied to projects in 58 countries in the United States, Europe, the Netherlands and Norway.

Presently, Grameen Bank serves the needs of 46,000 villages in Bangladesh with 1,267 branches. It has lent more than $4.5 billion in small loans of $12 to $15 to entrepreneurial women producing goods from their homes. The bank has even lent to beggars. Grameen Bank has over 3.7 million borrowers, 96 percent of whom are women with a 98 percent repayment and a recovery rate higher than any other banking system.

Noble cause and mission

Another is mail-order organic fashion People Tree, a pioneer in fair trade and ecology fashion that sells garments, underwear, and bed linen made from organic cotton. Organic fashion includes clothes produced without chemicals or fertilizers. In this case, organic cotton is grown using natural farming and production methods while providing traditional skilled farmers, artisans and workers a sustained livelihood and income based on fair or higher-than-market wages and buying prices.

Three, CSM brands due largely to its noble cause and mission, create new segments in otherwise mainstream markets while likewise, becoming highly differentiated and innovative in their category. Body Shop for natural-based personal care products, People Tree organic clothing representing ecology fashion and Grameen Bank for micro-finance and banking are but just a few notable examples.

Four, CSM brands engage in global corporate philanthropy. Not all CSM brands were born with a cause. Today, more and more mainstream brands are engaging in at least one major, sustained CSM activity that is globally implemented.

One example is Ronald McDonald House Charities. The first Ronald McDonald House opened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1974. The House was named after the brand mascot whom kids worldwide love and look up to as a symbol of happiness. Ronald McDonald Houses are temporary residences located near hospitals for families of children requiring longtime in-hospital treatment.

In these houses, families can eat, sleep and form support groups with other families in the same crisis situation. Resident families make a donation of $5 to $20 a day but where donations are not possible, their stay remain free. Today, there are 240 Ronald McDonald Houses in 25 countries while 30,000 volunteers donate one million hours of their time annually. The program has helped more than 10 million families worldwide.

Luxury watch Chopard raises money for aids and leukemia research. It also champions Alp Action, a Swiss-based charity that advocates preservation of the world's Alpine environment.

Conscious, ethical choices

CSM is indeed here to stay as more and more people; business leaders and cultures realize the value and intrinsic importance of doing business and marketing with an underlying and sustained societal and ethical cause, other than simple, pure profit. World data indicates an increasing number of consumers making socially conscious and ethical choices. More and more consumers are buying food, fashion and personal care products, among others, because they are natural-based or a percentage of the retail price goes to a favored cause.

(De Asis with email address at kdeasis@skyinet.net teaches Strategic Brand Management at the De La Salle Professional School's Graduate School of Business)

Creating Philippines Inc. via the Pearl Principle

By Nelia Cruz-Sarcol
Contributor

SINGAPORE had a vision—to become one of the world's most vibrant economies. And as early as 35 years ago, Singaporeans crafted a roadmap that spelled out how that vision will be turned into reality.

It was not a perfect roadmap, and I am sure that the officials had to take detours before they got to where they are. But whatever the roadmap's shortcomings, it still helped put the country where it is today.

How about us? Do we know where we are going to? Can we also put up a Philippines Inc.?

Everyone knows and advised every Tomas, Ricardo and Horacio that the only way we can create Philippines Inc. is to have a national vision and a national value system or collective consciousness.

But do we have a national vision? Is it clearly stated?

The basic rule is to "begin with the end in mind," and make the vision clear, easy to understand and remember. But more often than not, we start discussions with problems, get stuck there and end up with various analyses of whodunit and why?

These perennial questions will never have definite answers. So, I suggest we skip the finger pointing and "unproductive" analysis. Everyone has a hand in the predicament we are in. No one is innocent except our children who will inherit the mess we created.

Proactive advocates

Over 500 participants, some representing massive organizations, came to the people's congress last Sept. 28 and 29, 2004 at the Hotel Intercontinental in Makati City. The advocates of the Pearl Principle have come up with the following to help our country.

People's vision: Philippines—Pearl of the Orient: A Strong and Tenacious Republic Instituted by Nation-loving Generations (STRING).

People's operating values: Passionate, Ethical, Action-oriented, Results-focused Leaders of Society (PEARLS).

Ideology/culture: The Pearl Principle—Change must begin from within and within one's sphere; transforming a state of hopelessness into a state of optimism where opportunities are created, as in the creation of the pearl.

People's national slogan: "Pilipinas: Perlas Ng Silanganan"

People's symbol of hope and transformation: The Pearl

Symbol of hope

We need a symbol of hope and a model for transformation. It can't be just anybody for anyone can come and go and many have let us down. Almost everyone has a hidden agenda. There are those who easily crumble to pressure and others who succumb to temptation.

The "pearl," then, is the (near) perfect choice.

The oyster's inner struggle to survive has a romantic touch to it. It is faceless, but it has life. It is the only living organism which can transform an "irritation" into a priced gemstone.

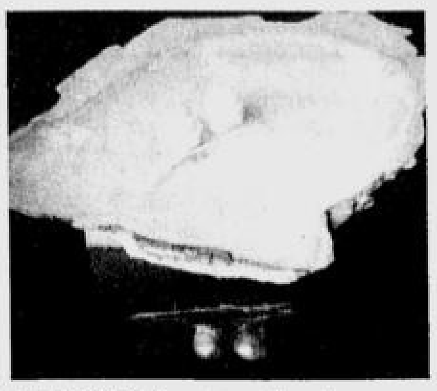
It is very easy for us to identify with the story of the pearl. It has no race, creed, political affiliations or gender. It has a universal appeal and its story is easy to recall.

National treasure

The pearl has always been in our subconscious. We see this symbol in many Philippine insignia. However, there is no conscious effort to make the pearl the shining symbol of our motherland.

We did a survey and we found out that the nipa hut comes next to the Philippine flag as a national symbol, followed by the jeepney, a second-hand reconditioned vehicle from another country which found its way into our streets. Does this say anything about our self-image?

Let there be a conscious effort to promote positivism among our countrymen, beginning with a simple step—adapt the "pearl" as our official national symbol, next to our flag and claim it—particularly the world renowned Philippine South Sea Pearls—as one of our national treasures.



TRANSFORM a state of hopelessness into a state of optimism.

China is known for its fabulous jade; Bangkok, for its amazing gold and rubies; Australia, for its extraordinary opals and onyx; Amsterdam for its superb diamonds and Japan for its mikimotos.

Let the Philippines be known for its marvelous Philippine South Sea pearls.

Should this be the case, we can create more product lines around the pearl, our new national treasure. Currently, we have a hodgepodge of pearl products, but there is no cohesive plan to grow and optimize the potential of this entire industry. Gains from the increased number of inbound tourists should trigger more tourism product development.

Enterprise development

This has a direct correlation with enterprise development. Where there is a master plan for destination development, there must also be a master plan for tourism product development—paying special attention to unique national treasures—to highlight the nobility of our past.

Other than the Philippine South Sea pearls, replicas of historically significant Philippine artifacts can be manufactured. These can be sold separately and part of collection sets.

This way, foreign and local tourists would have something new to add to their collection, each time they come to visit the different historic spots of our country.

The beauty of coming up with collectibles and collections is that we end up selling to those former visitors, even if he or she has long gone, just so their collections can be completed and updated.

Brand strategy

Philippines: Pearl of the Orient. This is our "historical brand" (since the 1500s). It's in Rizal's "Ultimo Adios." It is in the first stanza of our National Anthem. We can already connect and "operationalize" plans for brand strategy and business strategy. Truly, a string of pearls.

(Feedback at ncs.pearl@cie.edu or call CIE at 887-2828)

How to survive your BIR audit

THE KNOWLEDGE Institute will hold once again its very successful tax seminar "How to Survive your BIR Tax Audit" on March 15, 2005 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati City.

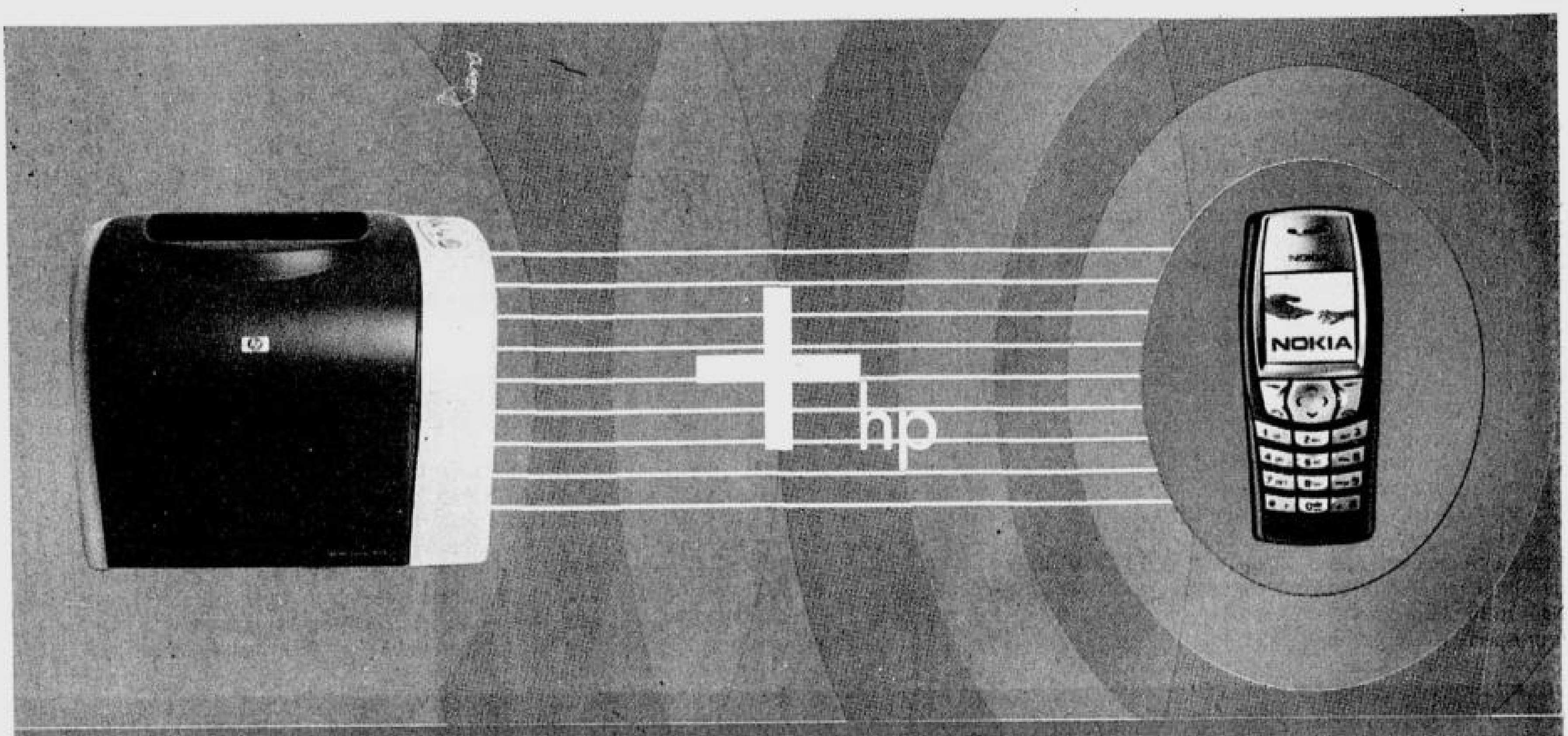
Among the topics to be discussed are the new No Audit Program under Executive Order No. 299, rights and remedies of the taxpayer, special investigation programs of the BIR, inside look of the BIR systems and processes, and tips on handling tax assessments successfully.

Speakers for this seminar include senior officials of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and tax partners of top accounting firm SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co.

For more information, call Mylene del Mundo at 891-0307 local 7253, or email mylene.r.del.mundo@ph.ey.com, or visit www.sgv.com.ph.

SINGAPORE AIRLINES

SIA'S INITIATIVE TO HELP LOCAL TOURISM
At the recent 12th Travel Tour Expo held at the SM Megatrade Hall, Singapore Airlines (SIA) offered special fares that encouraged passengers to fly via Cebu and Davao, with Silkair, before or after their trip abroad. SIA waived the usual $50 surcharge for these fares for on-the-spot bookings during the three-day expo. Photo shows Eugene Lee, SIA general manager; Rep. Edgar Chatto, chair of the committee on tourism of the House of Representatives; Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano and Rita Dy, SIA marketing communications and services manager.



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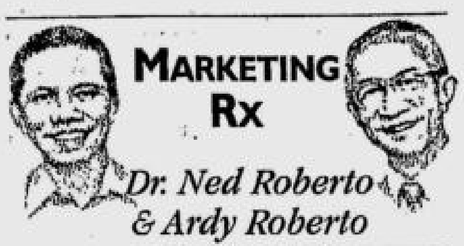

MARKETING Rx

Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

THE ASSOCIATION of Marketing Educators (AME) recently conducted a two-day seminar for heads and administrators of private schools. The seminar's general purpose was to discuss the role that marketing can play in the management of school programs or offerings. The senior Marketing Rx-er spoke on "Evaluating, Monitoring and Controlling the School Marketing Plan." The key question that school heads and administrators kept coming back to was this concern:

We are all experiencing a continuing decline in our college enrollment. How can marketing help us stop this decline and then reverse it?

Diagnosis and Rx:

Our diagnosis has to be specific it its accompanying prescription is to be actionable. This diagnosis can only be specific if the school program we are diagnosing is specific. Let us take the specific case of the college of business and the enrollment in its specific program, the BSBA (Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) program.

If the enrollment in our BSBA program has been declining over the past several years, where should we start our diagnosis?

In marketing, when we are face with declining sales, we start looking for the root cause or causes of the problem by asking two questions:

- What are our sources of sales and in what source or sources are we losing?
- Who is taking away sales from us? What is the market substituting in place of our product/service?

So in the case of our BSBA business school program, we should then ask:

- "What are our sources of enrollment and in what source or sources are we losing?"
- "What program or school is taking away enrollment from us? What is the enrollment market substituting in place of our program?"

Competition

The second question is about competition but it is competition as defined not by us but by our market. This is not a difficult cause of the problem to diagnose. For example, if we are losing enrollment to the school of nursing or the caregiver program, then the market of enrollees is saying that they are switching preference from a business administration training to training in nursing or caregiving. The prescription that logically follows is that we should ourselves switch our investments in more training facilities in favor of nursing or caregiving if we want to cash in early where the gold rush is located or relocated.

The first question is about the market segmentation and product diagnosis necessary for uncovering the root causes of our enrollment problem. This is the more challenging question. So we will focus on it.

Notice our sequencing. We said market first and then after comes the product. This is saying that we should start with market analysis. However, many of us tend to start with the product. Even experienced marketers are quick to say and ask: "May be it's our positioning. Do we have the right BSBA program positioning?"

Positioning?

Even if we start with product positioning, we will find that we have to go back and ask: "To what market segment or segments are we positioning our BSBA product?" Consider the case of PUP (Polytechnic University of the Philippines) College of Business and this college's BSBA program.

The specified objective of this program defines its positioning. The objective states: "At the end of the 4-year course, the student should be able to have the right attitudes, competencies, and qualities for starting and managing small and medium enterprises."

The promised benefits of the BSBA program to its enrollees are clear and specific: "If you enroll in this program you will be transformed into an employable graduate with the right work attitudes, competencies and qualities."

It's also clear that the program is targeting students who want to make their career in "starting and managing small and medium enterprises." So it's a program not meant for those who would like to work for large or multinational corporations.

But positioning is not the source of our school's business, that is, of enrollment. It is the market segments that are the sources. Positioning is the motivator and driver to get a market segment to generate enrollment. So we should start our diagnosis by asking who are the market segments of our BSBA program for enrollment.

It is useful to bear in mind that our students go through several stages in "buying" and "consuming" this 4-year program. There's the pre-enrollment and enrollment stage. Then there are the freshman, the sophomore, the junior and the senior stages that spread over the four years of the program. Then there is the post graduation job hunting and employment stage.

Our diagnosis starts at this point in time when we're recruiting students to enroll in our BSBA program or from the viewpoint of the students, at the pre-enrollment and enrollment stage.

At this stage, we have at least these four market segments: (1) the market segment of prospective student enrollees, (2) the market segment of the students' parents or guardians who will answer for the program costs, (3) the market segment of providers of student scholarships; and (4) the market segment of sponsoring companies and businesses.

The first segment is the school's direct source of enrollment. The second segment is in most cases the decision maker and influencer group. A student may choose to enroll at our BSBA program according to the parent's or guardian's gentle suggestion or in other case, their strong recommendation. The third segment provides the powerful incentive for a student to enroll in our BSBA program instead of enrolling in another. This is especially true for a deserving student who does not have the necessary funds to invest in his BSBA schooling. The fourth segment can also determine our BSBA enrollment in much the same way as scholarships do.

The market segmentation concept tells us that neglect of any one of these segments is neglecting a source of our enrollment and therefore a source of enrollment decline. In other words, loss of enrollment is the direct consequence of such neglect.

But sustained development, maintenance, nurturing, and deepening of relationship with each of these four market segments holds the key to getting continuing business and enrollment from each.

So ask yourself, have you formulated a good marketing plan to develop, maintain, nurture and deepen your school's relationship with each of these segments? And how well have you implemented each of those plans?

To the extent that there is no such marketing plan, then that is the extent you are risking loss of enrollment from these segments. And to the extent that your implementation of any of those plans is flawed, then that is the extent you again risk loss of enrollment from any of these segments.

All throughout the preceding, we have taken it for granted that the school's product we are marketing is the college degree program, BSBA.

That is the product at this point in time of student recruitment and enrollment stage. But over the next four years, this "product," this BSBA program, gets slowly produced semester after semester. As production is taking place, consumption of the program by the enrolled student is concomitantly happening. This is one way of viewing the BSBA program. It is viewing it as a 4-year long "service."

(To be continued next week)

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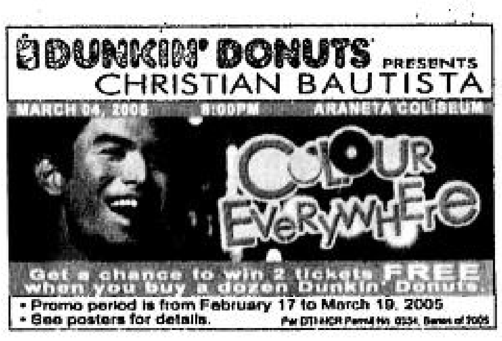
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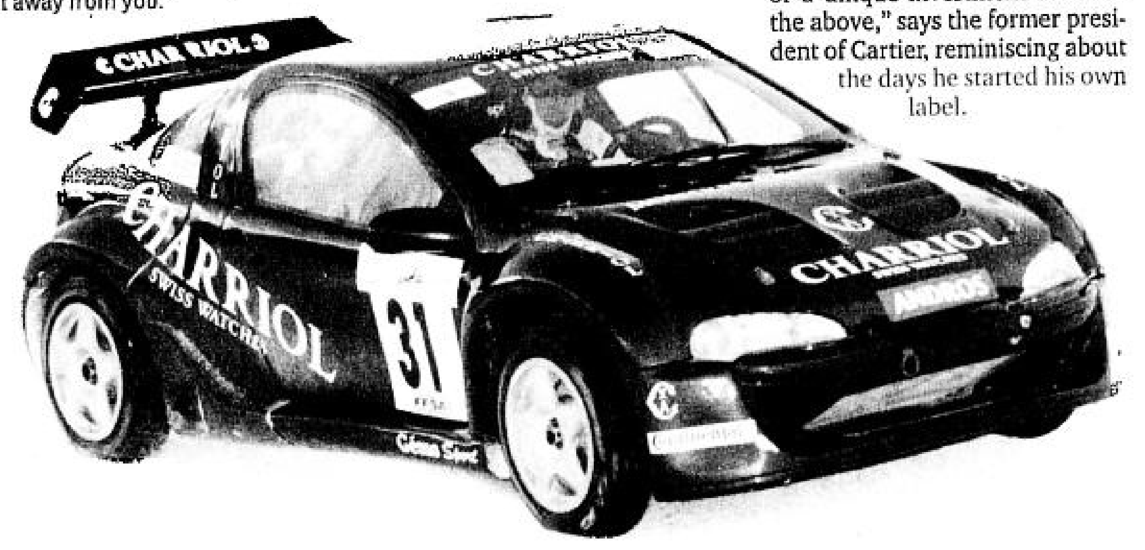
Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Life in the fast lane

"Life is like racing, and the first thing you learn is to win," says Charriol, reflecting his lust for life and business in car racing on ice where he recently won the coveted Andros trophy. "There is only one place in the podium: Numero uno. Frustration starts at No. 2. You cannot relax or someone will take it away from you."



In his time

Text and photos by Kitty Go
Contributor

Our resident globe-trotter catches up with the man behind the luxury label Charriol in the French Alps

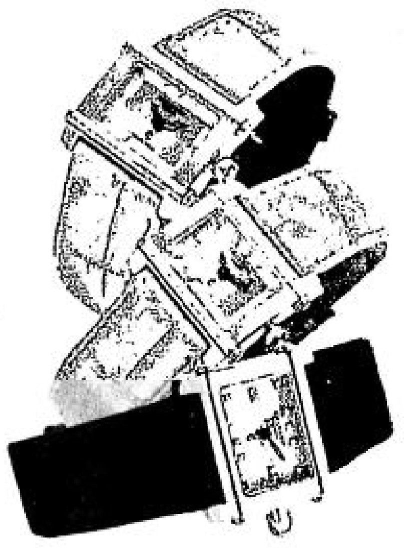
FROM MUMBAI to Monaco, Philippe Charriol has been a household name since he launched his eponymous luxury timepiece line in 1983 with the distinctive Celtic look of twisted cables that embodies his attitude to starting a business.

"When you start a business, you need either a unique selling product or a unique selling point or a unique investment or all of the above," says the former president of Cartier, reminiscing about the days he started his own label.

The Marseilles-native is a true citizen of the world, maintaining homes in Hong Kong, Geneva, New York and Dubai, among many key international cities where business takes him. Yet for Charriol, the quietly elegant resort town of Megeve in the French Alps, where he has had a chalet since 1983, is the place to relax in after a grueling work week at his Geneva headquarters, which is a mere hour away.

Megeve was developed in the '30s by the French branch of the eminent Rothschild banking family as an answer to Gstaad, St. Moritz

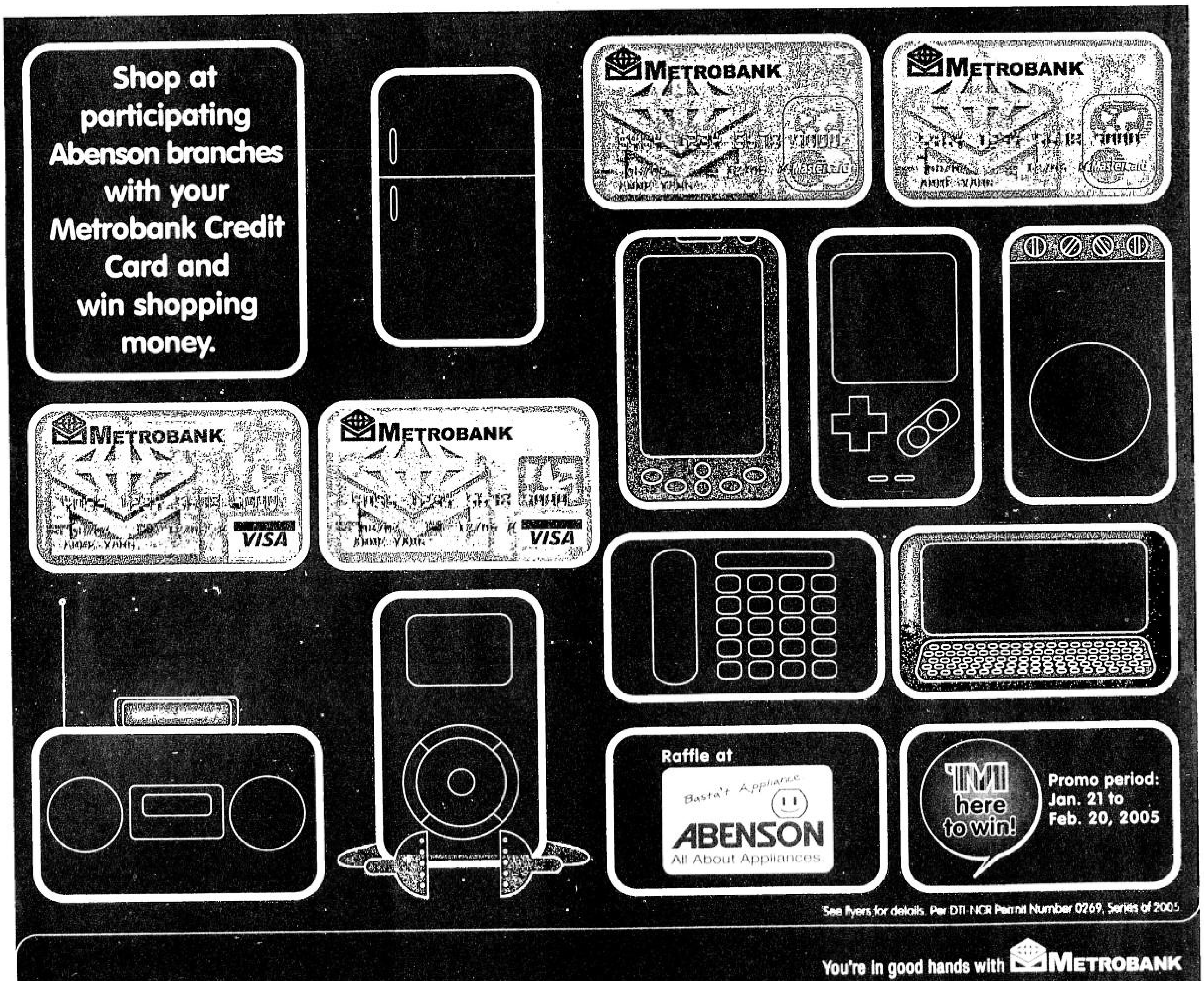
IN HIS TIME/ C4



Watch wardrobe

Charriol's favorite watch changes from season to season, and this time it is the Actor. "It takes years to develop a line so we really have to be in love with what is coming out," he says. However, a mainstay in his watch wardrobe is the Toubillon, a see-through watch with a complicated mechanism he developed 10 years ago. "It seems to be alive!" he exclaims.

The development of the jewelry line and certain leather goods is spearheaded by Coralie, Charriol's daughter and image model who lives in New York.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Retro colors on the beach

PHOTOS: SARA BLACK
MAKEUP: EFFIE GO OF VISAGE SALON
ACROPOLIS FOR RED EARTH
MODELS: CAT JUAN AND KIT BARRAQUIAS

WHEN it's time to beat the heat with a quick dip in the water, NafNaf has the goods to keep you well-suited under the sun.

Vivid hues and bold prints color this season's selection of bikinis and tankinis. Take your pick from the freshest floral patterns: tropical hibiscus for beachcombers, cartoon-like blooms laced with whimsical swirls for those looking for a bit of fun, and beautiful watercolor blossoms for the more laidback.

Fruits lend retro flair to '50s-style bikinis covered in cherries or apples. Nature-lovers will love the lush greens and ripe reds of the palm leaves that grace the triangle tops.

Swimsuits also come in various sizzling styles. Apart from the string bikini, tops are with flirty peek-a-boos, tied fronts and elongated triangles tops that are all padded for comfort.

Belted boy shorts, tie-side bottoms and well-cut panties can flatter any tush. Those who prefer to keep things under wraps will like NafNaf's equally sexy set of tankinis.

NafNaf stores are located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, The Podium, SM City Annex, SM City Bicutan, Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Metroeast, and all Cinderella outlets.

Sizzle with fab swimwear

SPEEDO'S Patua Bikini comes with a cute charm tied on one side of the bikini for good luck.

THIS Lozango Bikini with geometric strap and triangle top and buckled bottom is every fashionista's must-have.

SPEEDO presents the Rosa Chá collection, a playful blend of bold hues and prints that radiates with sheer sophistication.

The collection is a fusion of Speedo's athletic expertise and Amir Slama's creative prowess. Slama, founder of Rosa Chá, is a swimwear designer with a penchant for Brazilian art. Fans of Rosa Chá swimwear include supermodels Gisele Bundchen and Naomi Campbell.

"Amir picked up on the trends of 2005 and merged his swimwear's Brazilian flavor with Speedo's technical edge," explains Manish Mahtani, Speedo's vice president for operations.

Rosa Chá's items include triangle tops, bandeaus, dramatic cutaway one-piece swimsuits, boyleg hipsters and string bikinis. A departure from Speedo's signature solid and neutral hues, Rosa Chá offers bold and bright colors—red, lavender, green, orange, yellow and blues.

In addition, "Rosa Chá has eye-catching patches, beadwork, cutouts, geometric straps and appliqués. They're all handmade and hand-beaded in Brazil," says Abigail de la Fuente, merchandising manager for Speedo.

The designer also pays close attention to the material, selecting those that mold to the body without losing shape when wet.

The Rosa Chá collection includes the Patua bikini, typically Brazilian, with charms such as the Yin Yang, seashells, rabbit's foot, horseshoe, four-leaf clover tied on one side of the bikini; Chita Flower Hipster with colorful flower cutouts; Patch Triangle with silver appliqués; Lozango with a geometric strap triangle top and buckled bottom; Chita Mix Suit with waist cutout on its strapless one-piece suit; and Sunga Triangle Bikini with a ribbon-top detail.

The Rosa Chá collection is available at select Speedo concept stores located at Glorietta 4, SM Megamall, Robinsons Place Ermita, Alabang Town Center, Podium, Gateway Mall, Ayala Center Cebu, as well as Rustans Makati and Shangri-La Plaza.

THIS SPEEDO Patch Triangle with shiny silver patch appliqués and beads is all about glam.

THE STRAPLESS one-piece Chita Mix Suit is cut out on the waist and zipped up on the upper body.

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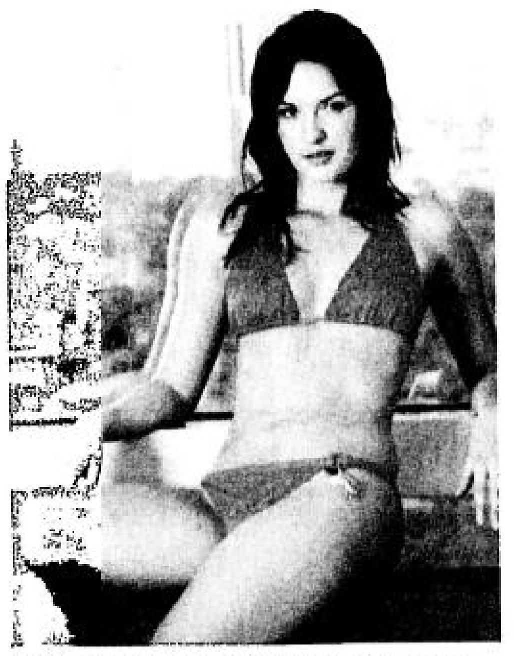
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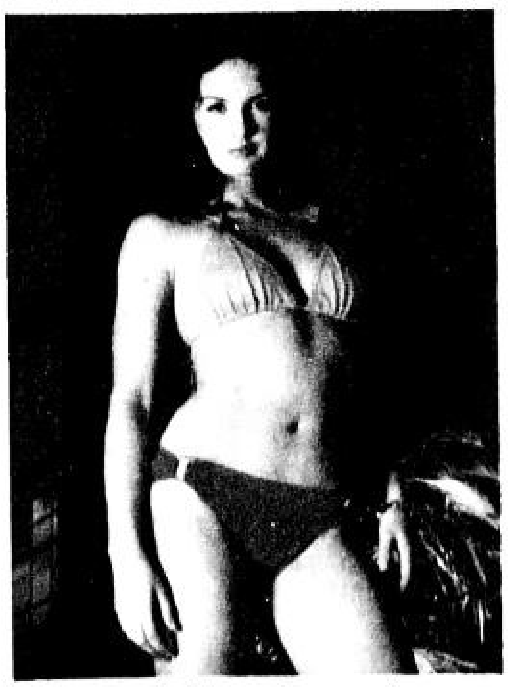
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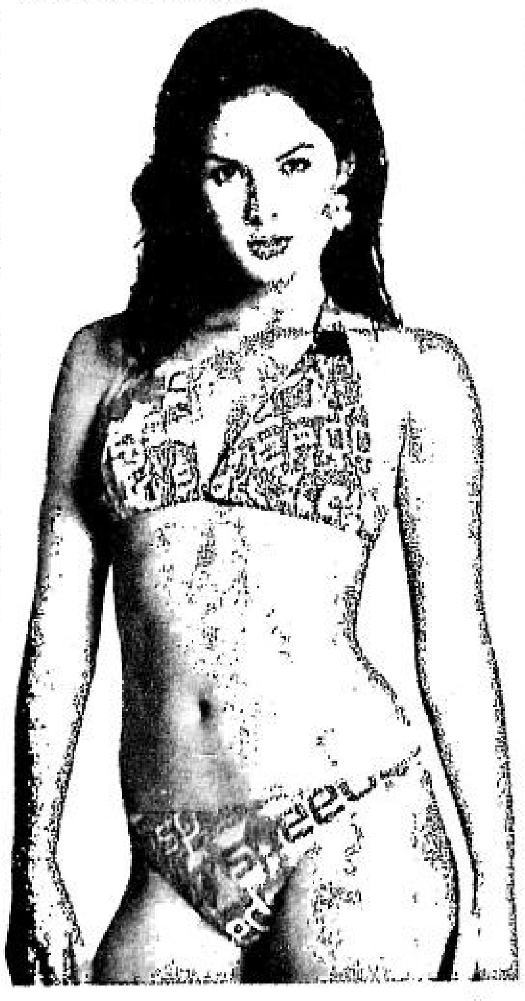
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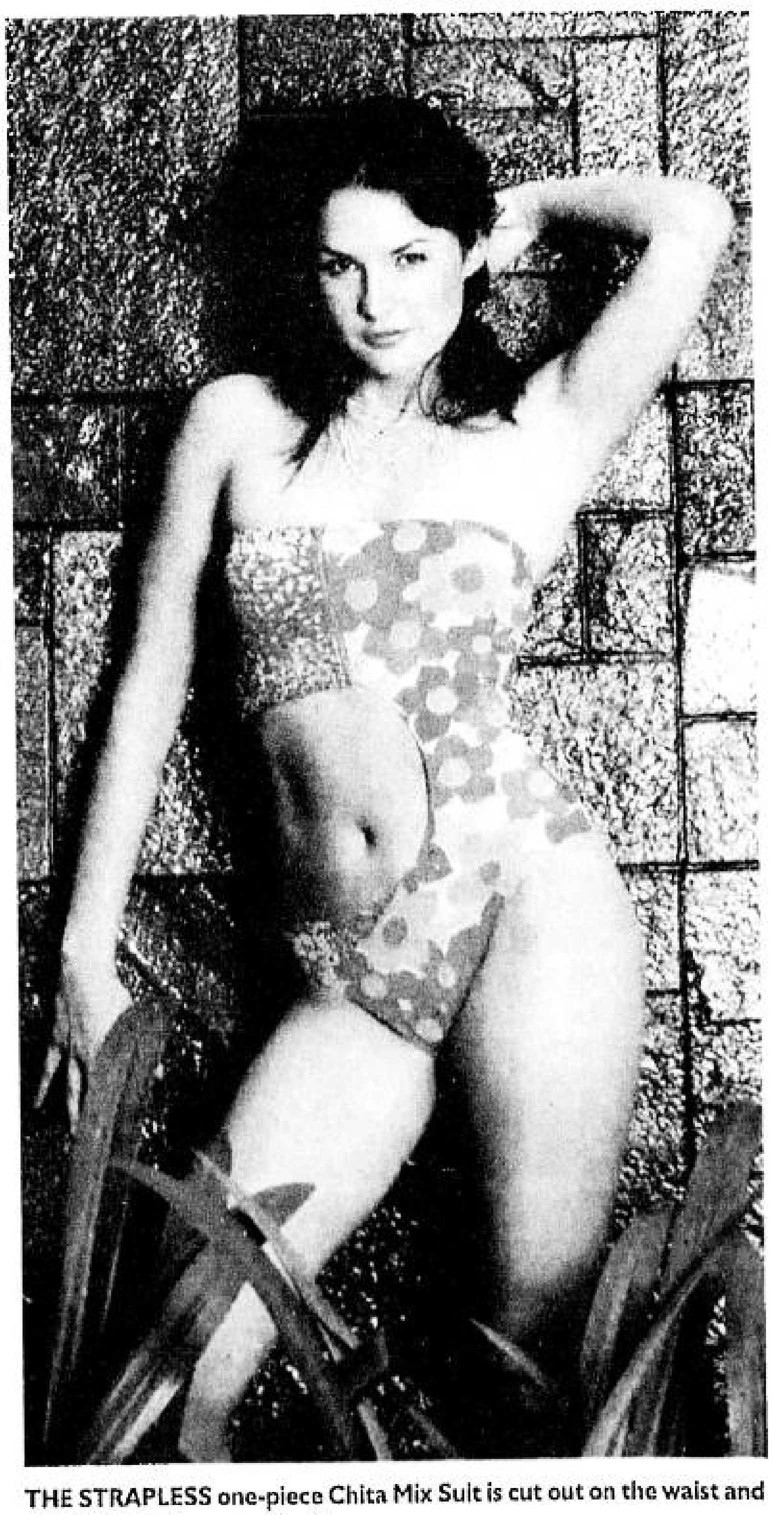
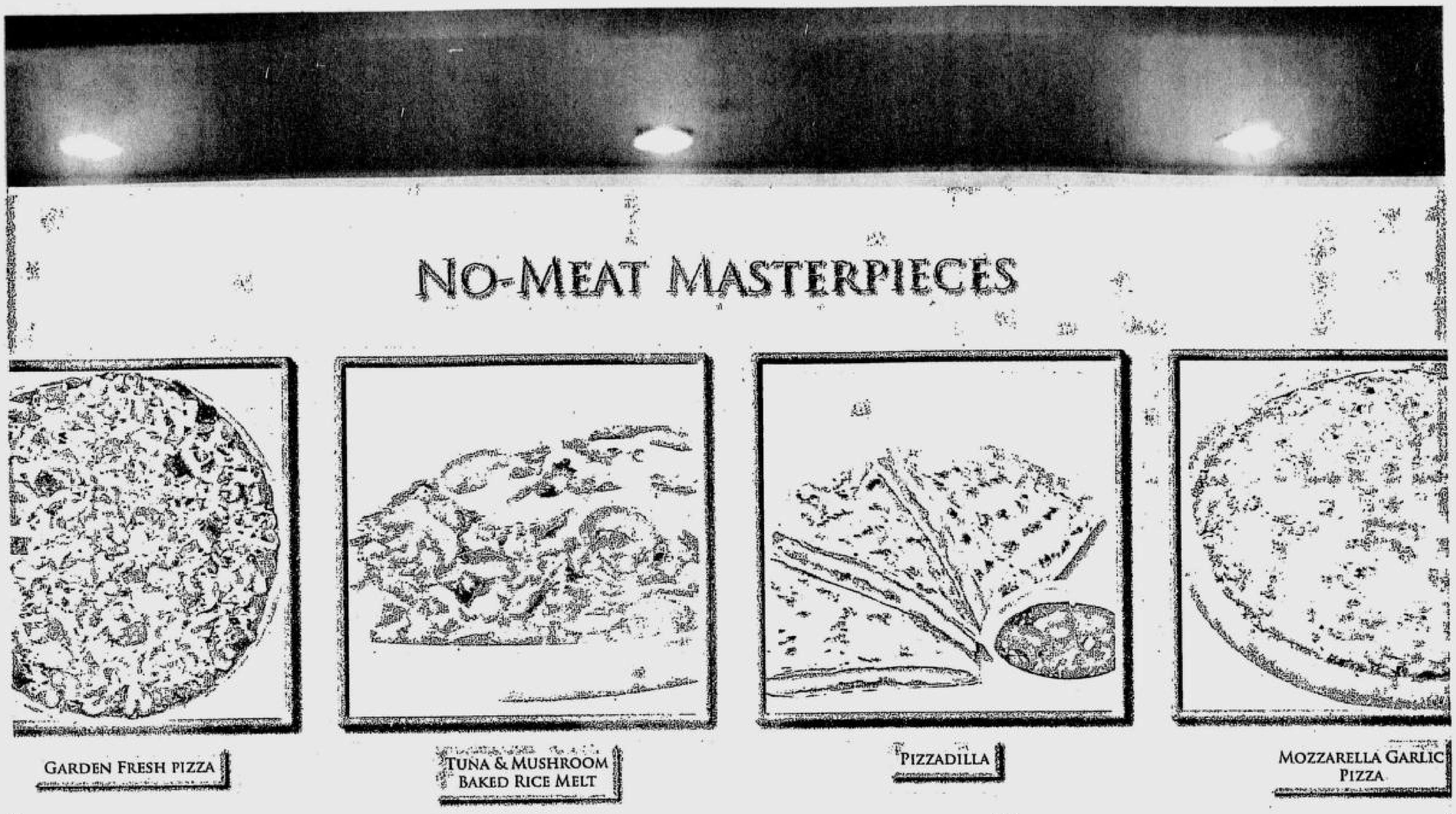

THE STRAPLESS one-piece Chita Mix Suit is cut out on the waist and zipped up on the upper body.

College searching for scholar

GOINGS ON

THE UNITED World College (UWC), in coordination with the Philippine Alumni Network and the Ayala Foundation, Inc., is searching for a top-caliber fourth year high school student interested in pursuing a two-year international baccalaureate course in Canada. The selected student will be sent to the Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific in Victoria on a full scholarship.

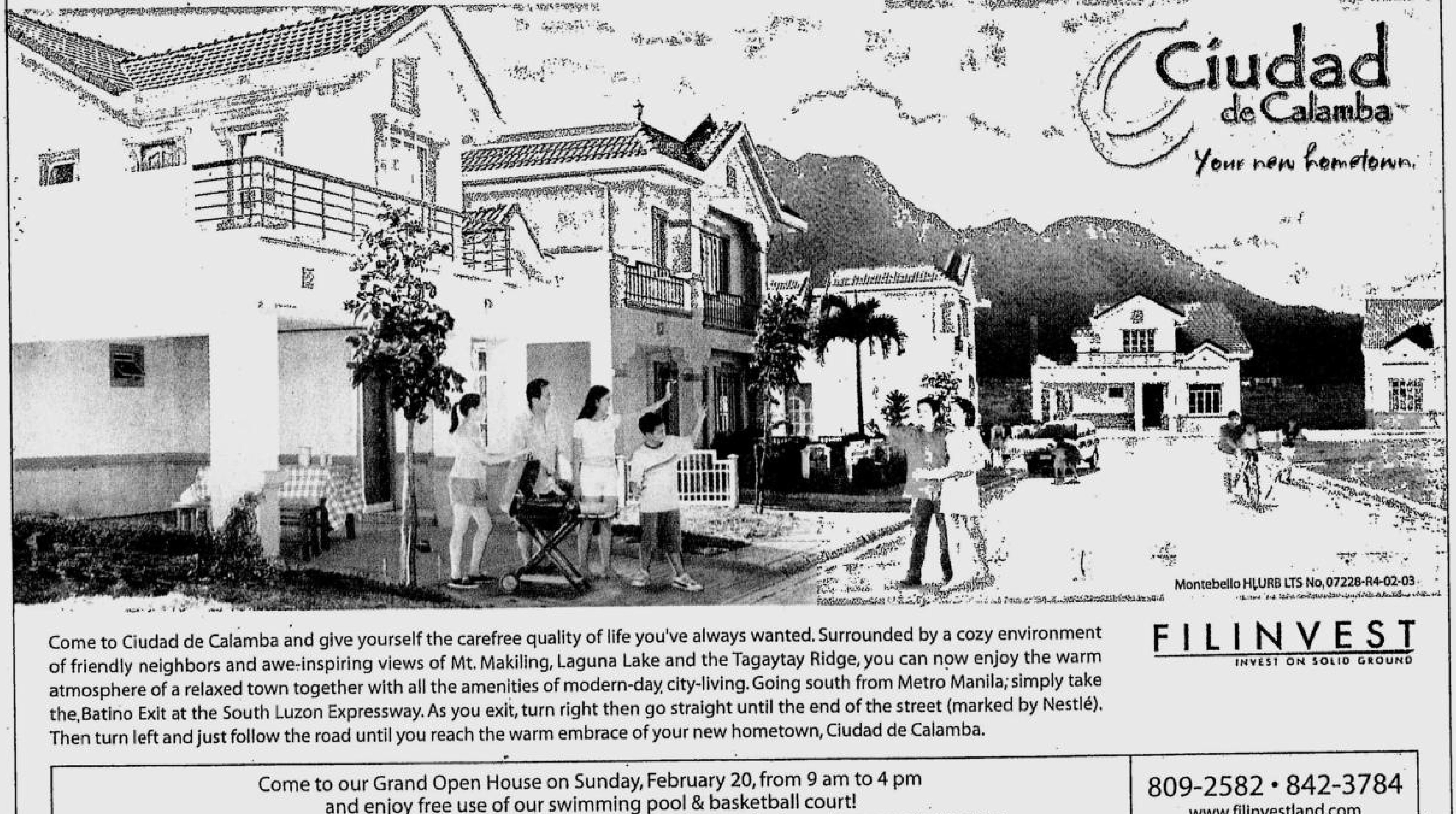
Applicants must belong to the top 10 percent of their high school's graduating class. They and their parents have to attend the orientation session to be conducted by the Philippine Alumni Network at the conference room of the Ayala Foundation, Inc., 10/F BPI main building, Ayala Avenue corner Paseo de Roxas, Makati City, 10 a.m.-12 noon, Feb. 20. Call 0919-8442603 or 8945620 local 104. E-mail uwcphilippines@yahoo.com or info@ph.uwc.org and tito@ayalafoundation.org. Visit www.ph.uwc.org and thewww.uwc.org.



Greenwich presents four delectable no-meat masterpieces. There's mouth-watering Garden Fresh Pizza with lots of cheese, mushrooms and pineapple. [illegible] vegetarian's delight! Want loads of garlic under layers of mozzarella cheese on your pizza? Well, there's Mozzarella Garlic Pizza for you. Or you might want [illegible] the Pizzadilla. Bite into its soft tortilla wrap stuffed with tangy garlic and mozzarella cheese. There's also Tuna & Mushroom Baked Rice Melt, a delightful blend of tuna, mushrooms and mozzarella cheese on steamed rice. Check out all [illegible] no-meat treats and you'll agree they deserve to be called masterpieces.

kd g greenwich

Say hello to a lifetime of happy memories and lasting friendships.



Come to Ciudad de Calamba and give yourself the carefree quality of life you've always wanted. Surrounded by a cozy environment of friendly neighbors and awe-inspiring views of Mt. Makiling, Laguna Lake and the Tagaytay Ridge, you can now enjoy the warm atmosphere of a relaxed town together with all the amenities of modern-day city-living. Going south from Metro Manila, simply take the Batino Exit at the South Luzon Expressway. As you exit, turn right then go straight until the end of the street (marked by Nestlé). Then turn left and just follow the road until you reach the warm embrace of your new hometown, Ciudad de Calamba.

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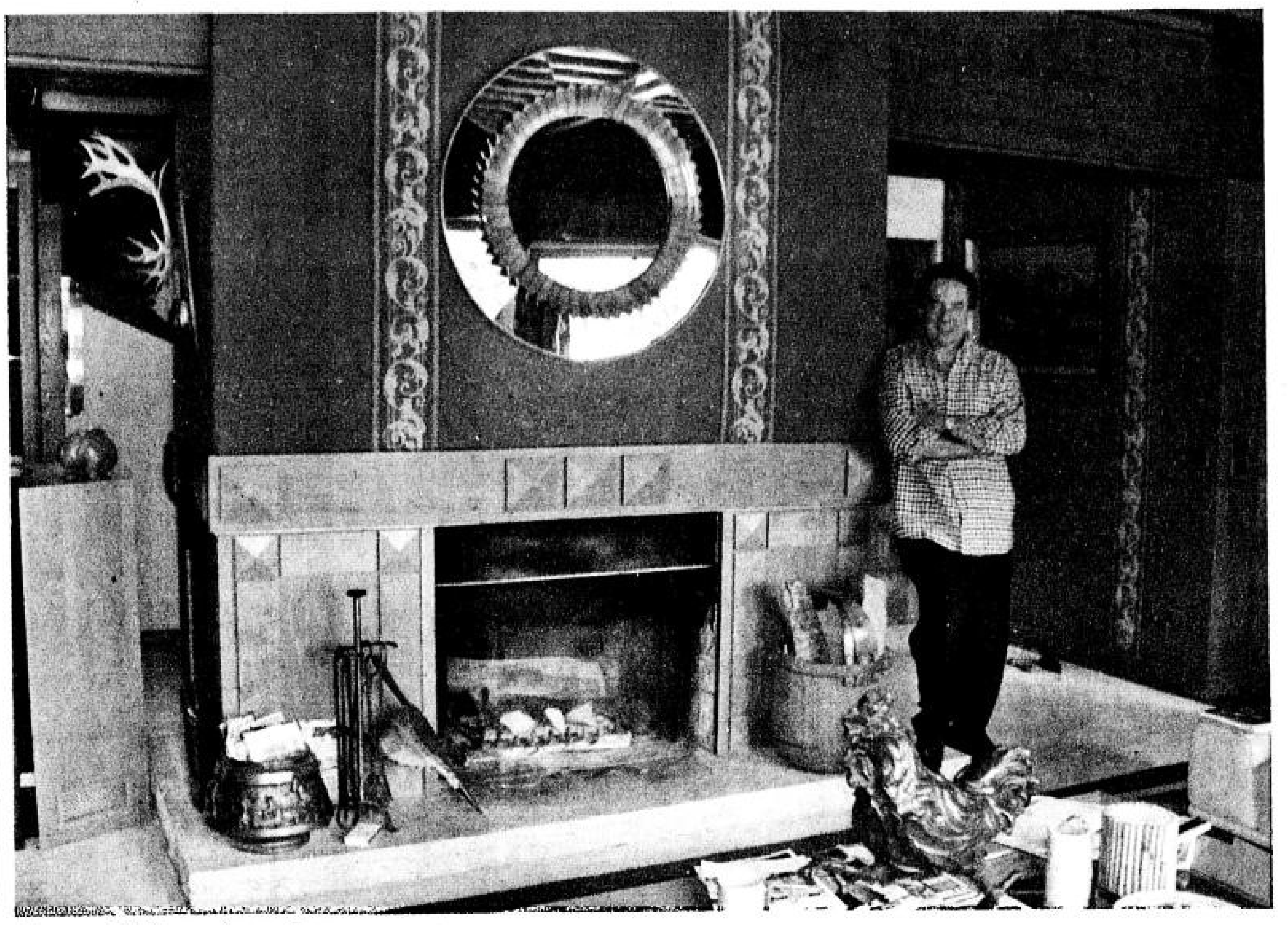
The stars come out

Despite celebrities such as Beyonce (above), Queen Latifah, Kevin Costner, Leon Lai, Emmanuelle Beart and Venus Williams wearing Charriol timepieces, "The star is me," as Charriol once told a Swiss publication, "because I am the creator and developer."



Home fit for a jeweler

"Don't you think it is such a coincidence that I am a jeweler and the *point de diamante* detail is all over this house?" comments Charriol. *Point de diamante* is the treatment surrounding the fireplace and many other parts of the house involving a square frame around a protruding point simulating a diamond.

In his time

Winter wonderland

Although he prefers to ski in Aspen in March, Charriol spends winters in Megeve, which has a policy of not allowing cars within the village. He loves the main square in the winter with its 11th-century church.

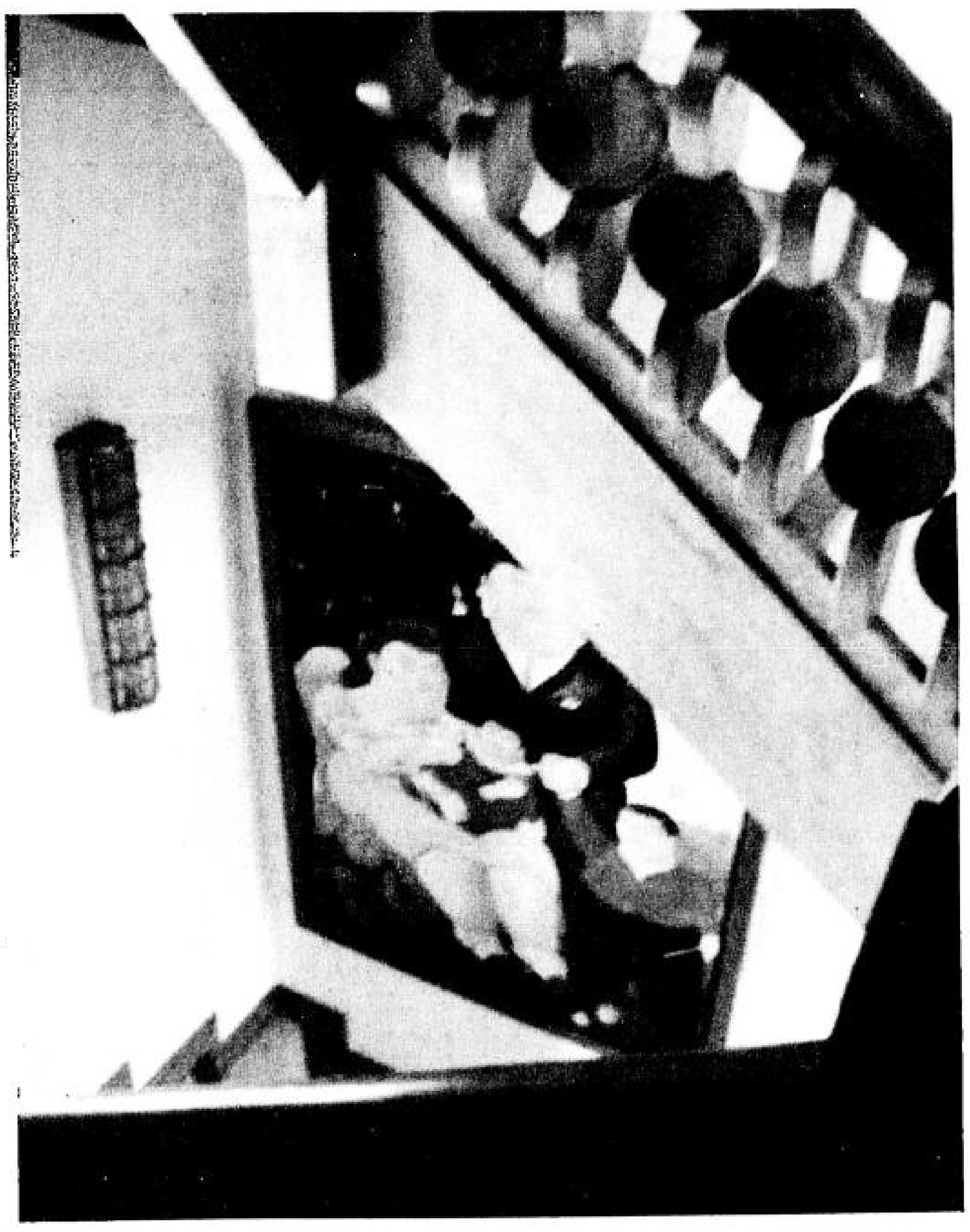
From page C1

and other Swiss ski resorts frequented by the rich and famous. Together with the swish and glitzy Courcheval, Megeve has come to be known as one of the most prestigious all-year resort towns in the world where great skiing, gourmet dining and people-watching come together amidst great views of Mont Blanc, the highest peak in Europe.

The INQUIRER caught up with Philippe Charriol in his chalet in Megeve recently. The globe-trotting businessman talked about the latest in watches, the beauty of his home, the future of the luxury goods house and his great passion, driving on ice at 160 mph.

The Charriol line is available at: 1/L Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City; Level R1, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City; Rustan's Makati; Rustan's Tower, Shangri-La Plaza Mall; Rustan's Harrison Plaza; Rustan's Ayala Cebu.

Email the author at kittygo_pdi@yahoo.com



Chalet charm

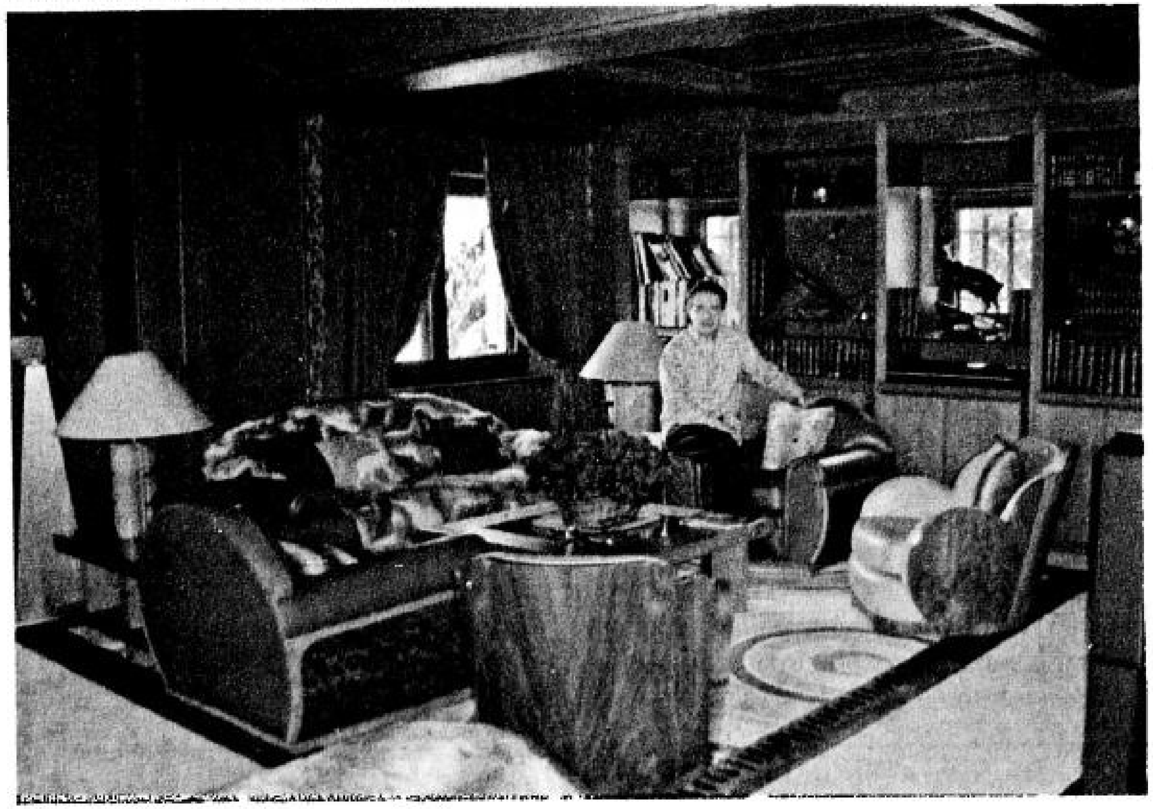
All wood used in Charriol's chalet are polished oak, and this stairwell is held together by wooden pegs, not nails. An imposing Fernando Botero painting hangs in the landing. The chalet was built with furniture to match such as lamps and tables in the living room, but it is in the bedrooms that storage space and even the beds themselves are built into the architecture.

Historical value

Charriol unearthed the original Celtic design at the British Museum, and this inspiration catapulted the label to fame. Since its inception in the '80s, the Celtic line remains a bestseller and is constantly updated.

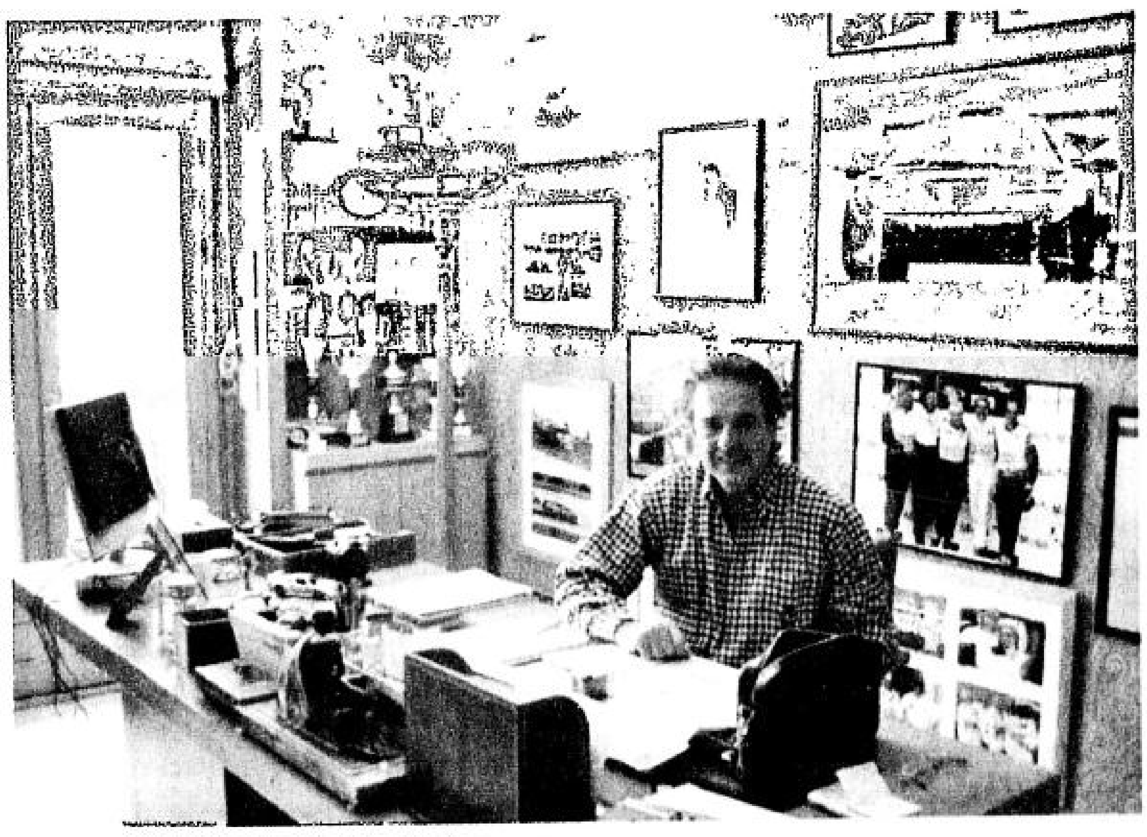
Glamorous marble

Except for extending living and entertaining spaces, Charriol touched almost nothing from the chalet's original design including this bathroom in black marble that heralds bygone days of glamour. All bedrooms of the chalet have en suite bathrooms, a rarity even in today's French country houses and virtually unheard of in the '40s.



City style in the mountains

Charriol fell in love with this 1940s chalet for its urban style not typical of "Heidi" Alpine houses, yet maintaining the warm look of a log cabin.



In constant development

Charriol believes "the creative spirit is the most significant expression of the independent spirit," and his company reflects this belief with extension products like leather goods, top-selling pens, jewelry and a fragrance that will be unveiled in June 2006. Behind Charriol are trophies, awards and photos of "life in the fast lane" of ice car racing.

PHILIPPINE Fashion Week opens this March.

Make way for Philippine Fashion Week

THE PHILIPPINE Fashion Week (PWF) returns for its eighth consecutive run with a 10-day extravaganza of couture and fashion this March.

PWF is an annual gig that brings together the top local and foreign brands as well as fashion insiders, editors, journalists and buyers to celebrate the best of Philippine fashion.

The country's directors, stylists, hair and makeup specialists, technicians and professional models will also be participating in the affair.

Fashion Week's now-famous model parties, which celebrate over 45 modeling agencies and their constituents, will again be in full swing.

Fans can also expect the return of CalCarrie's Day, which showcases the agency's hottest models and gives everybody a chance at the big time.

This year anticipates the biggest number of labels and designers to be featured in a Philippine fashion event to date.

'Call 8440467.

Finnish designer visits Manila

THE MENTION of Finland may not automatically conjure fashion, but designer Paola Suhonen is determined to change that with her IVANAhelsinki label.

After establishing IVANAhelsinki in 18 countries, including Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong, Suhonen is now coming to the Philippines to show her distinctive designs.

The 29-year-old designer often cites "my dear childhood memories!" as the source of her designs.

IVANAhelsinki clothes are recognized for their large, colorful avant-garde prints.

For the past seasons, Suhonen has been drawing inspiration from the easygoing lifestyle of the Finns in the 1970s, making her collection a fresh extension of traditional Finnish fashion design.

IVANAhelsinki represents, however, the new Finnish style called "Art Modem."

The nostalgic, Slavic Scandinavian style of the clothes has particularly appealed to trendy urban people with strong lifestyle values.

By inviting Suhonen to the Philippines, the Embassy of Finland offers a unique occasion to catch a glimpse of exciting Finnish design in the Philippines.

The one-week event includes IVANAhelsinki fashion shows as well as extensions of Suhonen's designs.

In addition, Suhonen will give guest lectures on Finnish design in Philippine fashion and design universities.

Suhonen's visit is part of the Finnish embassy's cultural program to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Finland-Philippines diplomatic relations.

Dazzling tribal bling-blings

JOEY Albert, Jam Morales and Carmen Patena have been among the recipients of one-of-a-kind jewelry made by Genevieve Ramos-Bueno, a mother and Ibanag tribe member whose jewelry designs of semiprecious stones and Swarovski quality-crystals are must-haves.

"Objects made by hand contain the spirit of those that crafted them; there is a dignity to hand labor, a dignity of mind and heart not of hand alone," says Ramos-Bueno.

Named after her 2-year-old daughter Cayla Jill, Ramos-Bueno's CJ Gems are wearable art, crafted from natural gem stones in various shapes and colors. She has also incorporated precious shell and ornate capiz pendants to her Filipina-inspired collection.

Fluorite nuggets range in color from purple to green to clear, light avocado to olive green, all hues that are flattering to any skin tone.

The handcrafted necklaces feature sturdy clasps, are of superior quality and are sold at very reasonable prices.

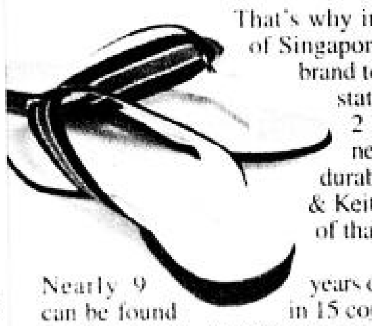
Made-to-order pieces are also available. Individualized pieces make excellent bridal party presents and even wedding giveaways.

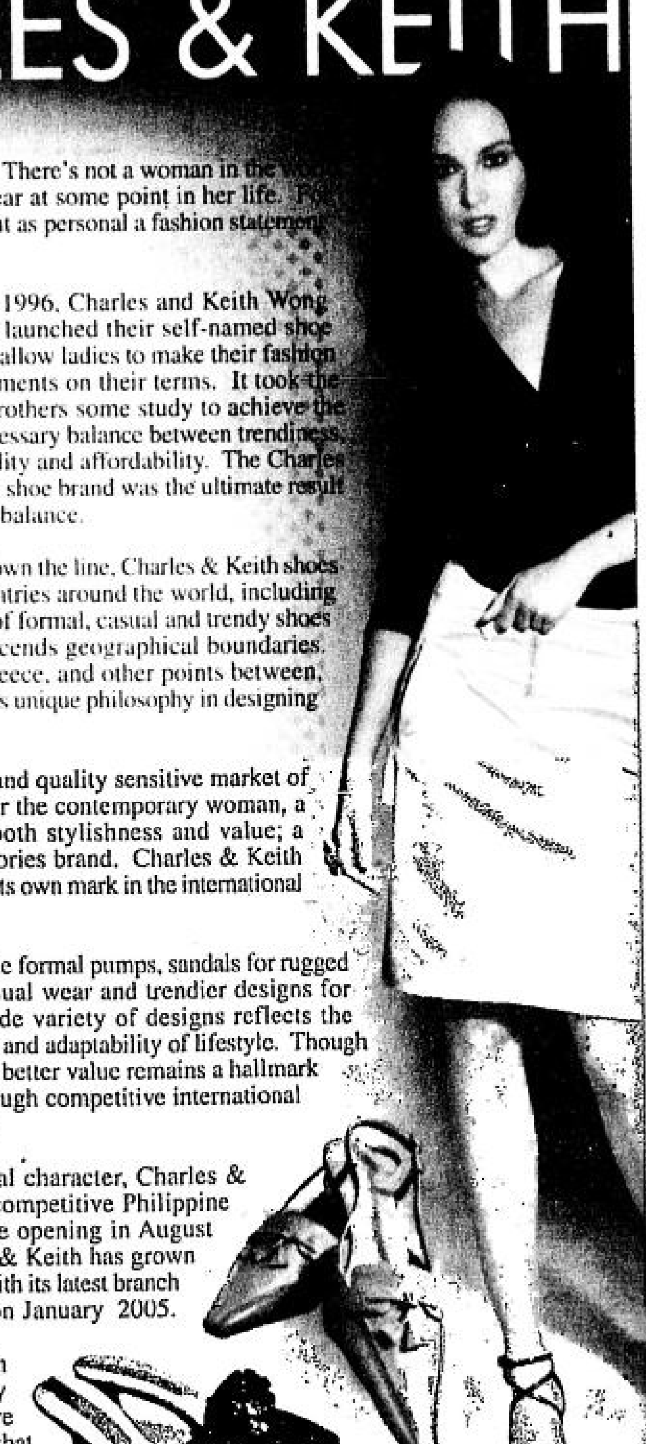
In the US, CJ Gems are available for lobby shows managed by the designer's sister, Gladiola DeKing. CJ Gems can come to a establishment and set up the jewelry for sale to employees, staff, residents and visitors. Sponsoring establishment receives 10 percent of gross sales.

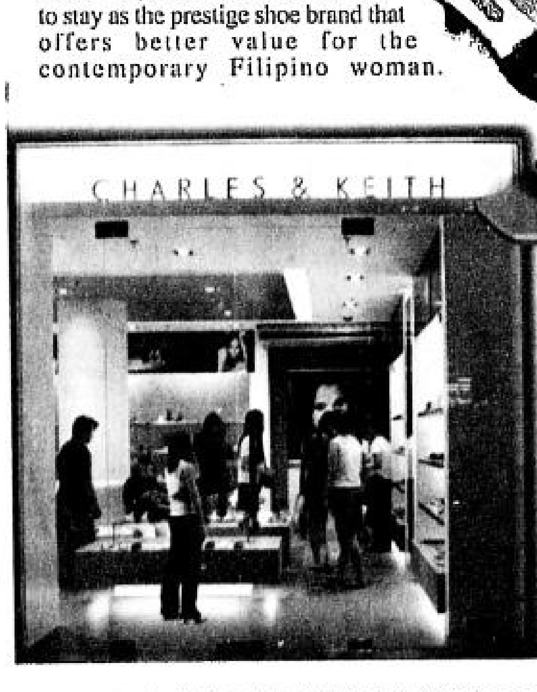
Flyers will be provided to help advertise the event as well as media notification through community newspapers.

Call (508) 6345342 or e-mail AAADeKing@yahoo.com.

RAMOS-BUENO







SHOE TALK WITH CHARLES & KEITH

Shoes are uniquely a ladies' thing. There's not a woman in the world who hasn't obsessed about footwear at some point in her life. For the woman of today, shoes are about as personal a fashion statement as one can make.

That's why in 1996, Charles and Keith Wong of Singapore launched their self-named shoe brand to allow ladies to make their fashion statements on their terms. It took the 2 brothers some study to achieve the necessary balance between trendiness, durability and affordability. The Charles & Keith shoe brand was the ultimate result of that balance.

Nearly 9 years down the line, Charles & Keith shoes can be found in 15 countries around the world, including the Philippines. The brand's mix of formal, casual and trendy shoes has gained a following that transcends geographical boundaries. Women from New Zealand to Greece, and other points between, have discovered Charles and Keith's unique philosophy in designing and marketing ladies shoes.

Owing to its origins in the price and quality sensitive market of Singapore, Charles & Keith is for the contemporary woman, a market segment that demands both stylishness and value; a challenge for any shoe or accessories brand. Charles & Keith has met that challenge and created its own mark in the international shoe industry.

Charles & Keith collections include formal pumps, sandals for rugged use, low-heeled numbers for casual wear and trendier designs for the fashion conscious. This wide variety of designs reflects the contemporary woman's flexibility and adaptability of lifestyle. Though considered a prestige shoe brand, better value remains a hallmark of Charles & Keith products through competitive international pricing strategies.

Despite its strongly international character, Charles & Keith has made inroads in the competitive Philippine shoe market. Since its first store opening in August 2002 in SM City Cebu, Charles & Keith has grown to 7 branches across the country with its latest branch opening in Ayala Center Cebu on January 2005.

If the brand's performance in international markets is any indication, Charles & Keith is here to stay as the prestige shoe brand that offers better value for the contemporary Filipino woman.

Today's Filipino woman can now enjoy Charles & Keith's distinctive mix of design and affordability in retail outlets across the nation.

SM Cebu
2nd Level, SM City Cebu

SM Megamall
3rd Level, SM Mega A, SM Megamall

Robinsons Galleria
3rd Level, Robinsons Galleria, Edsa

Alabang Town Center
2nd Level, New Wing, Alabang Town Center

Robinsons Place
Level 2, P. Faura Wing, Robinsons Place Manila

Ayala Center Cebu
Ground Floor, Paseo Verde, Ayala Center Cebu

Limketkai Mall
Ground Floor, West Concourse, Limketkai Center, Cagayan De Oro

Shang Is Where The Heart Is

Fall in love all over again with the soulful and romantic renditions of your favorite songs, as performed by world-class Filipino artists.

You can also shop to your heart's delight with a Special Valentine Sale at participating stores mallwide.

Experience fun, romance, and great times straight from the heart of Shang!

A HEART-STOPPING SHOWCASE OF ATTRACTIONS

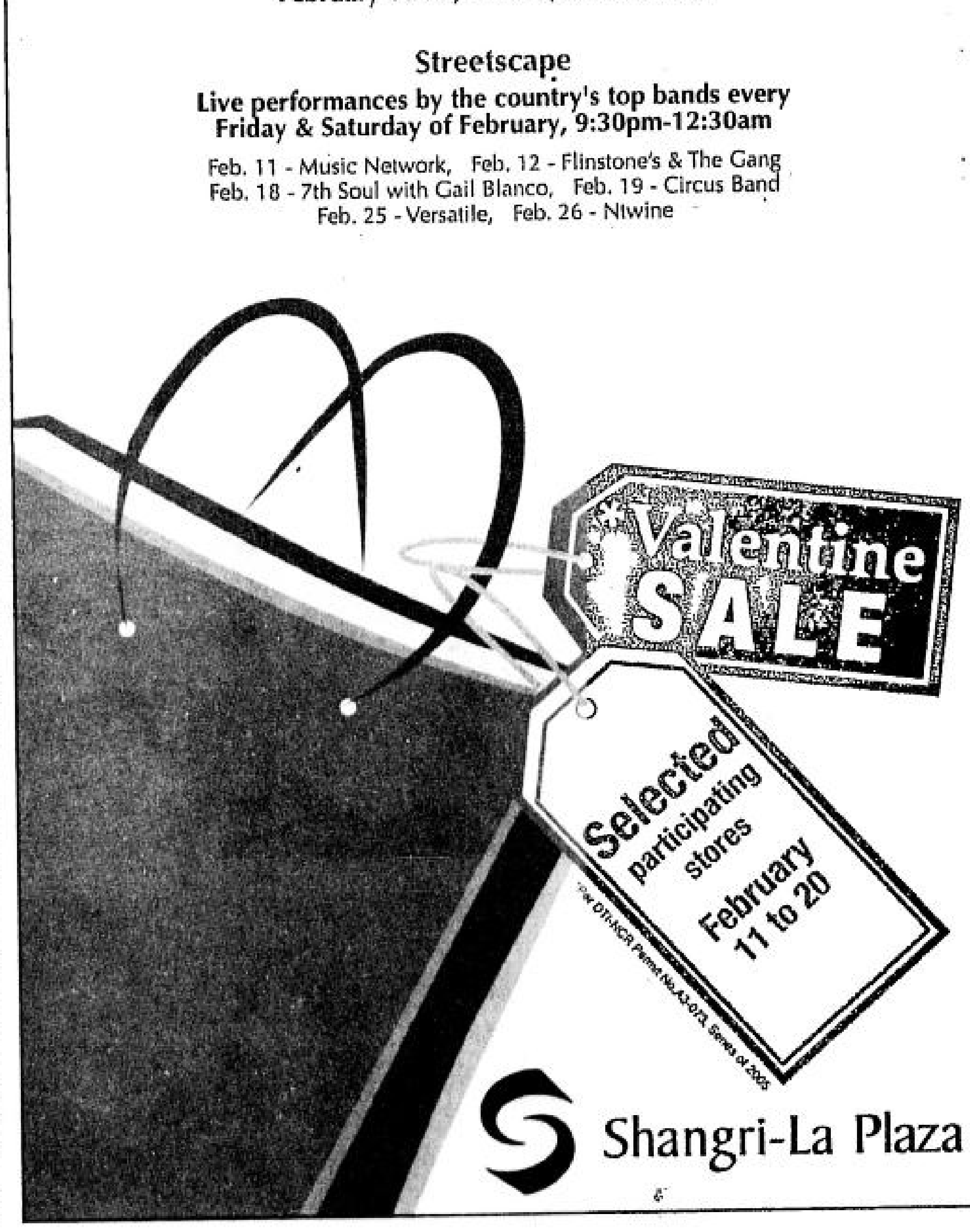
Acoustic Perfection
February 11, 6pm
Grand Atrium, Level 2

Arthur M
February 12, 5pm
Grand Atrium, Level 2

A Special Valentine Show
with the Apo Hiking Society
Grand Atrium, Level 2 February 13, 5pm

Discover Japan Through Contemporary Posters
with The Japan Foundation, Manila
75 poster-works of modern,
cutting-edge Japanese graphic designers
February 11-26, Level 4, Exhibit Area

Streetscape
Live performances by the country's top bands every
Friday & Saturday of February, 9:30pm-12:30am
Feb. 11 - Music Network, Feb. 12 - Flinstone's & The Gang
Feb. 18 - 7th Soul with Gail Blanco, Feb. 19 - Circus Band
Feb. 25 - Versatile, Feb. 26 - Ntwine



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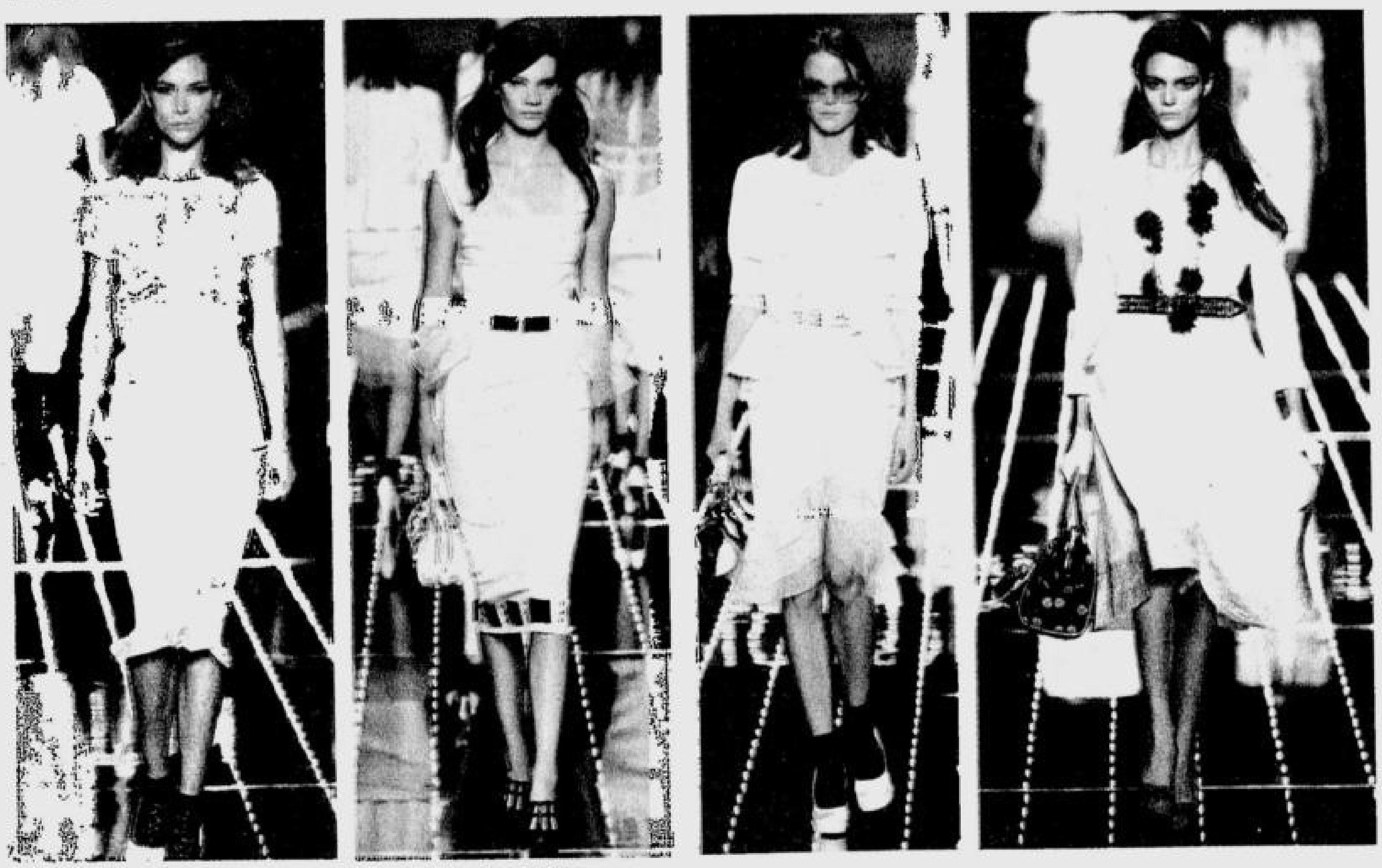


LOUIS Vuitton Women's Spring-Summer Collection 2005

Fresh, ultra-feminine surprises

LOUIS Vuitton offers an ultra-feminine, fresh look for its Women's Spring/Summer Ready-to-Wear Collection 2005, with a rich, sparkly feel inspired by the world of showbiz.

This collection also revisits the 1940s, offering a surprising potpourri of prints perfect for slender, sylph-like figures.

Ballerina skirts make their way into summer, teamed up with little tailored tops boasting puff sleeves and Claudine collars. Skirt suits also take center stage, offering high-waisted jackets and pencil skirts ending just above the knee.

The coat dress also makes an appearance, sported over fine knitwear with the sleeves pushed up—a modern slant on the collection's '40s feel. Skirts, both printed and plain, are gathered at the front, giving a refined, glamorous look. Also making an appearance are breeches and an ultra sexy pair of shorts in monogrammed denim.

Embroidery, sequins, braids, pleats, fringing and frills are impressively injected into the entire collection. Materials such as silk, organza, taffeta and cashmere are married with the natural textures of cotton and linen, giving the new season's range a luxurious yet delicate feel.

Accentuating the collection's playful side, the season's hottest shoes boast rounded shapes in ultra-colorful materials, their richness in details offering that slightly graphic touch.

Costume jewelry is also in, punctuating the collection with strings of raffia flowers, perspex bracelets sparkling with strass or even art deco necklaces offering a *trompe l'oeil* effect with an imposing stress and pearl trim.

Leather goods in four contrasting styles are lined up for the new season: Japanese artist Takashi Murakami once again captures that joyous springtime feeling by adding a cheery cherry print to the Monogram canvas.

Denim is teamed up with red alligator to produce chic small-sized bags with a vintage feel. This season's multi-pocket bags contrast Vuitton's silver Monogram with a splash of acidic color.

In the Philipines, Louis Vuitton is located at G/F Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 7560637 or visit www.louisvuitton.com.

CHRISTINA Ricci models.

Louis Vuitton presents new Philippine team

LV PHILIPPINE general manager Mark Browne, Lifestyle Asia's Sari Yap and LV brand manager Rhea de Vera

LOUIS Vuitton, the world's leading luxury brand, recently held a special luncheon to introduce Rhea de Vera, Louis Vuitton Philippines' new brand manager, to the local media.

From the Asia Pacific Headquarters in Hong Kong several executives flew in to mark the occasion: Vita Wong, communications director for Louis Vuitton Asia Pacific; Andrew Glenn, senior press and public relations manager; Peachie Dieken, advertising and editions manager; and Sheryl Tam, press and public relations manager-product.

The M Café at the Ayala Museum was the chosen venue. Louis Vuitton added chic touches including monogram flowers on the windows facing the lush gardens of Greenbelt 4. The guests enjoyed champagne and canapés before partaking of sumptuous French-Asian cuisine.

Mark Browne, general manager of Louis Vuitton Philippines and Micronesia, welcomed the press and thanked them for their continued support. "We are delighted to welcome Rhea De Vera in the Louis Vuitton family," he said.

In the Philippines, Louis Vuitton is located at the ground floor level of Greenbelt 4, Ayala Center, Makati City.

Louis Vuitton has a Customer Information Service Hotline at 7560637. Visit the website at www.louisvuitton.com

PHILIPPINE Tatler's Anton San Diego with Andrew Glenn and Sheryl Tam

LIZA Ilarde-Cuenca of Mega

JUDITH Juntilla of Men's Zone

JOANNE Rae Ramirez of People Asia

LOUIS Vuitton Asia Pacific advertising and editions manager Peachie Dieken with Philip Cu-Unjieng of Metro and Raul Manzano of Metro Society

PEPPER Teehankee, Sari Yap, Vita Wong and Millet Mananquil

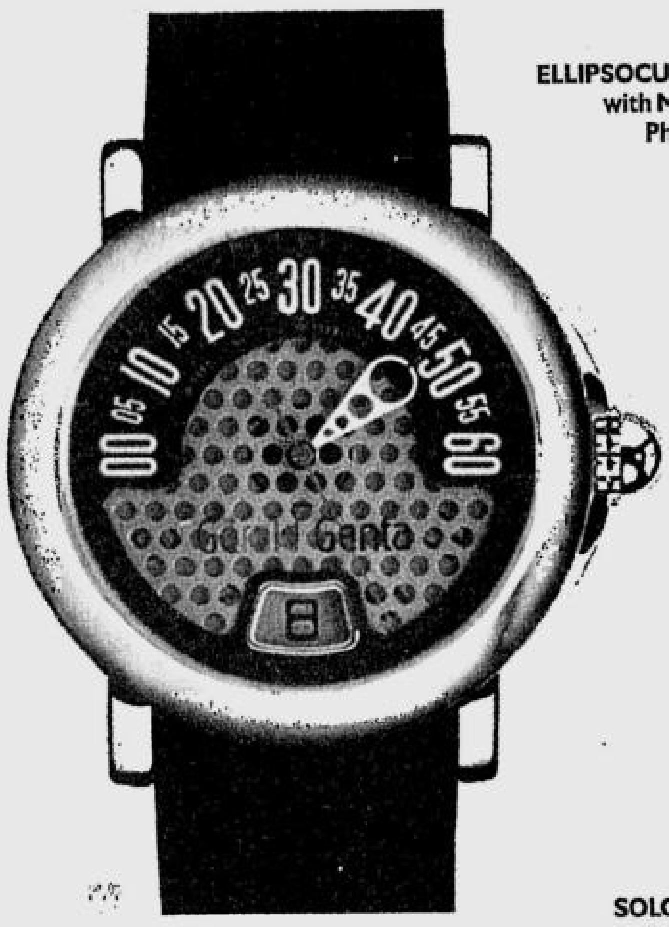
SUMMIT media team with Browne: Cosmopolitan's Myrza Sison, Preview's Pauline Juan, Cosmopolitan's Donna Cuna-Pita, Preview's Ichie Apostol and Rorie Carlos

Two distinguished names in luxury watches

DANIEL ROTH
GENEVE

ELLIPSOCURVEX with Moon Phases

PREMIERE



ARENA Sport Retro

Gerald Genta

SOLO Bi Retro

DANIEL ROTH

CHRONOMAX

GERALD Genta and Daniel Roth, under the Bulgari group, are significant names in the world of luxury timepieces.

Daniel Roth has been strongly identified with the exclusive development of mechanisms that are considered to be "firsts" in the watchmaking industry. These include the double-sided tourbillon, the retrograde hands, the successive indication of 24 time zones in digital form and the tourbillon with 200-hour power reserves.

The Daniel Roth collections now include the Grandes Complications, which is recognized by collectors and connoisseurs alike as the pinnacle of watch craftsmanship.

The collection comes in cases fashioned in solid gold, platinum and steel and a pair of blue hands entirely polished, refined and smoothed by hand.

To this collection belongs the Daniel Roth Grand Sonnerie, a remarkable timepiece specially created to celebrate the brand's 15th anniversary. Available in a limited series of only 10 timepieces, the Grand Sonnerie has an elegantly engine-turned white-gold dial in a style developed specially for the brand's 15th anniversary.

Extraordinary

The Complications Line, on the other hand, presents three extraordinary timepieces: the Ellipsocurvex moon phases with a curved case, the Datomax featuring the exclusive Daniel Roth 130 automatic movement and optimal date readability due to a single aperture, and the Chronomax with its Optimax segmented counter designed to measure the barrel spring torque for accurate indication of ideal conditions for chronograph use.

Under the Vantage collection is the Premier timepiece, which has an exclusive and patented DR mechanism with an off-centered retrograde hour hand and a completely decorated, hand-bevelled movement with "Côtes de Genève" finish.

Vantage's Metropolitan, on the other hand, provides easy time-zone change and easy-to-use DST device for its corporate clientele.

Then there's the Ladies collection.

DANIEL ROTH
GENEVE

LADIES Chronograph

DANIEL ROTH

GRAND Sonnerie

MASTER'S Chronograph

Featuring a mechanical movement, the Mini Lady is a jewelry watch with an elegant gold bracelet and a natural mother-of-pearl dial that comes in different colors. It has a premium version set with precious gemstones.

The Gerald Genta Collection combines the Swiss watch heritage and avant-garde designs, using revolutionary materials, technology and movements.

Gerald Genta's watchmakers have carefully redesigned and reengineered three main complications that allow its watch movements to be the most precise in the market. The Jumping Hour, Retrograde Minute and Retrograde Date movements guarantee premium quality and reliability.

Four lines

Gérald Genta's collection is divided into four lines: Solo, Arena, Octo and Fantasy.

The Solo Line has "Tonneau "shaped cases in classic Art deco designs. The watches are water resistant to 3 ATM and are available in alligator straps or steel bracelets. The Solo Line comes in Retro and Bi-Retro movements.

With its creative and colorful round-faced selections, the Arena Line can be both classic and sporty. It has Retro, Bi-Retro movements and Chronograph movements, in both Contemporary and Sport timepieces.

Available in Automatic or Quartz, Arena Contemporary's distinctive feature is its unique retrograde minute dial indicator. Straps and bracelets are available in leather or in steel, and yellow or white gold.

Carbon fiber and rubber are just some of the novel materials used in the creation of the Arena Sport Line. The collection comes with crown protectors, sapphire glass with metal-plated logo, circular grained screw down crown, and is water resistant to 3 ATM.

It is available with Retro, Bi-Retro and Chronograph movements. Straps are available in leather, rubber or steel bracelet.

The Fantasy Line features bejeweled Walt Disney characters. It is available in Automatic and Quartz with Retro movement. The watch is in sapphire crystal, is water resistant up to 3 ATM, has a circular grained crown, and comes with alligator strap or steel bracelet.

The Octo Line is the newest addition to the Gerald Genta line. It comes with an octagonal case, onyx cabochon screw down crown, and completely hand-engraved design. The line has Retro and Bi-Retro movements and is water resistant to 10 ATM.

Gérald Genta and Daniel Roth are exclusively available at Rafael Jewellery, 2/L Shangri-La Plaza Mall. Call 6363398.

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See mechanics posters & flyers for details
Per DTI NCR Permit No 0289 Series of 2005
Fashion everyday
www.rds.com.ph
Robinsons Galleria Flagship Store
Robinsons Malls | Waltermart Malls | Tutuban Center | Starmall Shaw | Metropolis Star Alabang | Festival Mall Alabang | Nepo Mall Pampanga

Fashion hub launches website

RUSTAN'S U invades cyberpsace with the launch of its website, www.urustans.com.ph.

The site features striking images of models in vivid colors and fashionable U signature ensembles. You can groove to the in-web music while surfing the latest collections available at the website.

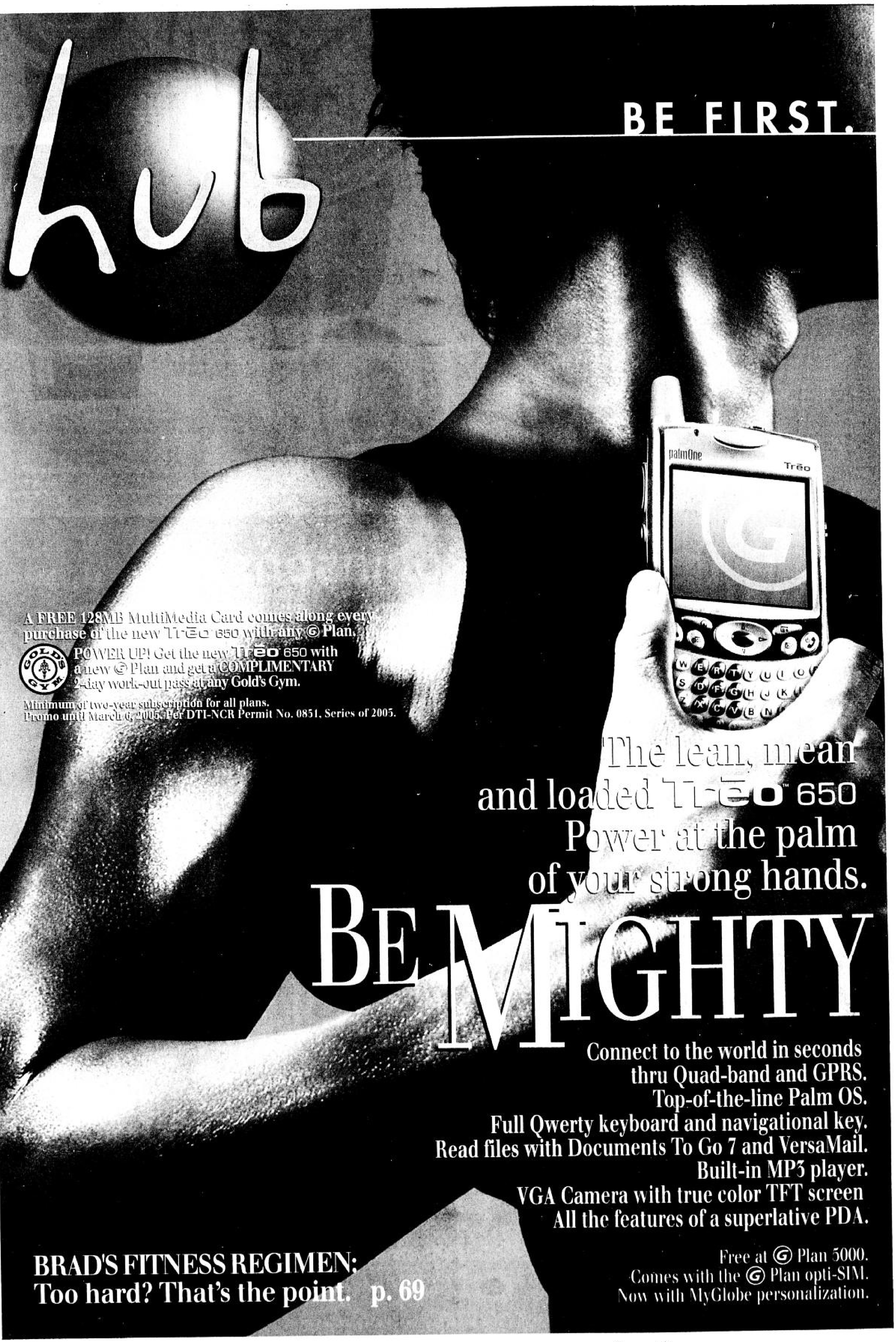
Choose from among five galleries of fashion collections. The Sexy gallery displays Steve Madden, Hot Kiss and Baby Phat collections, brands that give that extra swing in your hip when you walk that bossa-nova beat.

The Sporty gallery lets you view cool and trendy casuals from Rusty Sportswear, U, Denim Bar, Hollywood Jeans and Dollhouse. Nonconformists and alternative aficionados can check out Soul Edge and U Night clothes at the Alternative gallery.

Stylish and timeless pieces await you at the Classic gallery, offering the latest pieces from YVIP, Jeans Mavi and FCUK. The glamorous lot, meanwhile, can preview U Night and XOXO creations at the GLAM gallery.

Then there's The Lounge. Replicating the "retailtainment" store concept of the U floor in Rustan's Makati, The Lounge lets you get the coolest wallpaper downloads and go to the collection galleries. Expect more fun features soon as the site continually updates itself.

All brands mentioned are exclusively available at the U Floor of Rustan's Makati, Alabang Town Center, Shangri-La Plaza, Robinson's Place Manila and Cebu Ayala.



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All the features of a superlative PDA.

Free at G Plan 3000.
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Now with MyGlobe personalization.

BRAD'S FITNESS REGIMEN:
Too hard? That's the point. p. 69

Get the genuine unit only at the HUB. Rockwell. Greenbelt. Glorietta. The Podium. Greenhills www.hub-eshop.com

palmOne Globe HANDYPHONE

LIFESTYLE

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inquirer life name/city/message to
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THE 24-Hour DINING CAFE

P 130 /person Fil/Am Breakfast
P 150 Up/person Lunch/Dinner

Cief Coffee & Food
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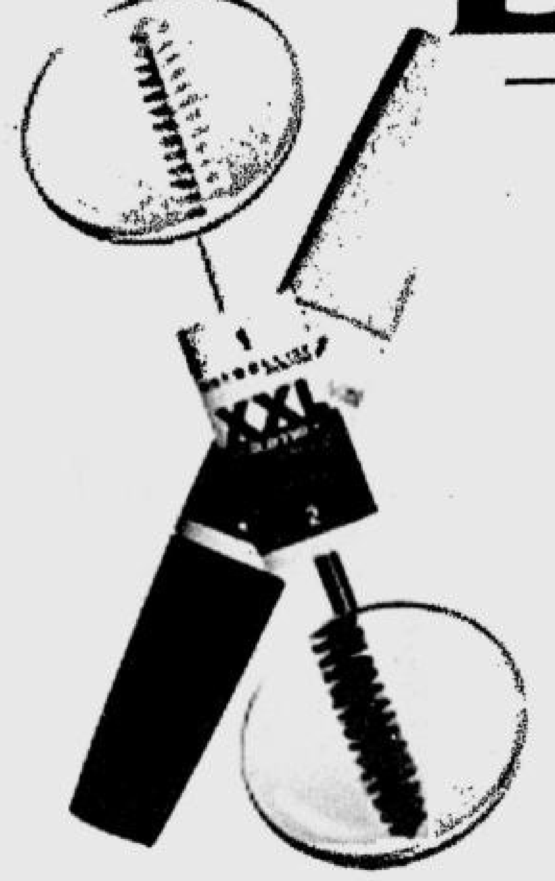
229 T. Morato Ext., Q.C.
Near ABS-CBN.
Tel: 415-5601
CIEF (See-ef) or C F for Coffee & Food



MAYBELLINE XXL Volume + Length mascara

Kérastase Institute is the first of its kind in the Philippines to focus on pampering and restoring the health of hair

KÉRASTASE INSTITUTE

KÉRASTASE Institute at 6750 Ayala Avenue, Makati City

High-tech hair treatment salon now in Manila

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

I HAD been to the Kérastase Institute in Singapore and availed of hair diagnosis via its machine that magnifies your scalp and hair by about several hundred times, the better to check out their condition. The boutique can recommend the perfect combination of treatments for you.

I was extremely impressed with the treatment, so I asked L'Oreal's Angelique Villaraza if we would have the machine available in the Philippines.

Less than a year after, they presented something better. The entire Kérastase Institute ESA, which is very impressive and modern with its pristine white, silver and glass interior, is located at the posh 6750 Ayala Avenue, Makati.

Specialists of skin care and body massages are practically in every corner of the city. But the Kérastase is the first of its kind in the Philippines to focus on pampering and restoring the health of the hair.

What makes it different from any old hair salon is its approach, which is almost medical, but the pampering factor is boosted up to 10 times.

You will be offered a welcome drink of three kinds of teas. Green tea is for those who have high cholesterol, blood pressure and blood sugar level. Chamomile is for those who experience allergies, migraine, menopause and insomnia. And peppermint is for those with painful dysmenorrhea, dizziness, fainting or depression.

I had my hair diagnosis and yes, the results were the same as Singapore's. They recommend you wash your hair the day or night before instead of the day itself to get a more accurate reading.

I was diagnosed with very oily scalp with some flakes, with healthy hair near the roots, and dry and damaged hair at the ends.

I even tried the new gadget, the micro mist machine, which reduces the water molecule so it is easily absorbed by the hair's core for softer and better hydrated hair.

The head-and-shoulder massage is included as part of the treatment; it kneads away all tension and stress. The masseuse makes it a point to ask you if the pressure is okay; she does not assume like other salons that everyone wants a hard massage.

Then they will explain the products. You may buy the maintenance products but the super concentrated treatments are for salon use only. No matter how conflicted your hair condition is; trust me, they will have the solution.

The favorite treatment I am allowed to take home is the Aminexil tonic. It cleans out the scalp to prevent hair loss due to falling hair and a clogged scalp. My hair has been thicker since, but it comes in a pricey tag of P3,000+. If you are already bald, though, it is too late for you.

The Vitacement treatment for dry, damaged ends is available only at the salon. It did wonders for the texture, manageability and shine of my damaged ends.

There is a connecting salon that is very reasonably priced.

New discovery

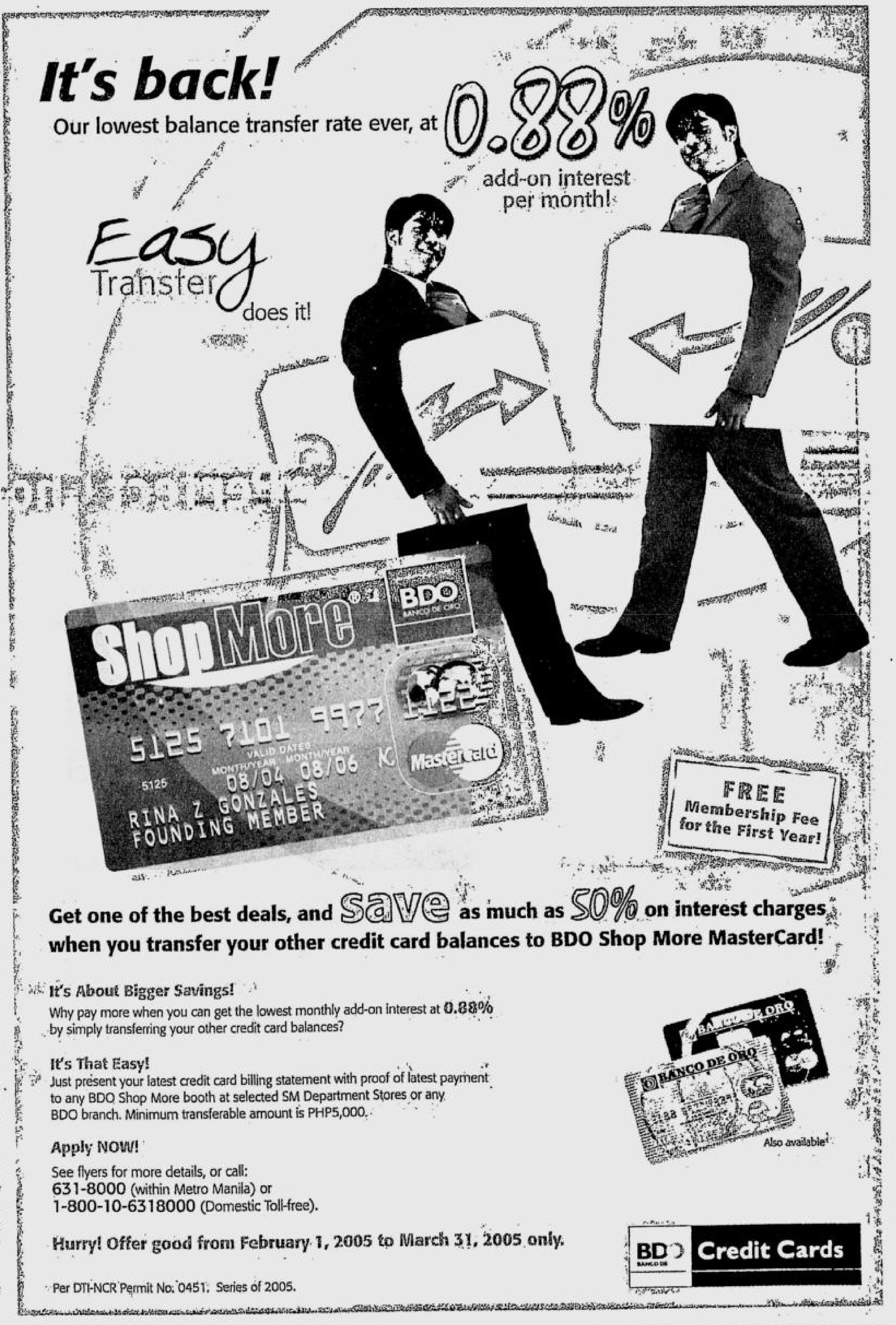
A double-ended mascara is nothing new to us; it is where one end is white for coating the lashes and infusing them with treatment, and the other end is dark where bonds with the base makes lashes thicker and more defined.

Maybelline has come up with the cheapest mascara of this kind called XXL Volume + Length micro-fibre mascara. In this mascara the white end is also responsible for adding extra fibers to be lengthened.

What I love about it is they look like false eyelashes as they make my already long lashes even longer, the skinny strands thicker but defined without clumping.

The mascara comes in three (for treatment, for volume and for lengthening) for the price of P469. I got the waterproof variant in very black. I just remove it with cleansing oil from Shu Uemura or Fasio.

E-mail the author at kinnysalas@yahoo.com



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0451. Series of 2005.

It's a good Friday.
Enjoy a Filet-O-Fish throughout Lent.
love ko 'to

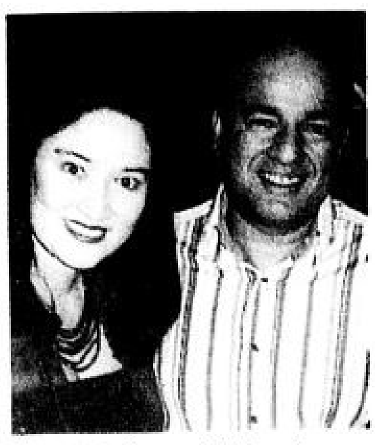
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PATRICK and Patty Teo with Philippine Stock Exchange's Vivian Yuchengco

SINGAPORE'S SOCIALITES: Monica Grande with Tessa Montensew and Clarissa Bautista

VICTOR Sassoon with his wife Michelle (right) and her mother Rahma Elias (left)

GANG OF THREE: *Moi* with Micky Cojuangco and his wife Lizette Bengson


MAITE Gallego with Haresh Hiranand

ANNABEL Pamplona with Sharmila Hiranand

LOVERS Johnny Velasquez and Maripi Muscat

GEORGE Filmerides and Lucy Pang

TING Aylion and wife, vivacious Annie A.

DOLLY and Popoy Del Rosario

Singapore party lasts till the wee hours

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THIS popular couple always marks their respective birthdays with a fab dinner party. We are referring to the megabanker **Renato "Bing" de Guzman** and his wife, the well-dressed **Kathy Goduco.** They hold the party either in Bali, Singapore, Manille or Paris, inviting guests from the top social register of the various countries, including the hip set and the new guard, dahlings.

Jenny Chua, chair and CEO of Raffles International Limited, may not exactly be a party-going personality, but at the birthday party of Bing de G., she swore it was her new passion to watch "Filipinos who really know how to party."

And party we all did at the posh Raffles Hotel of Singapore, which became the hottest ticket in town for that swinging night. And swing the international pack did to the hard-to-beat dance music of the Spirit of '67 that Bing de G. flew in for his bash.

The popular Raffles and Billiard Room of the hotel was closed to the public for this private gathering of hotshots—who all dug into the five choice buffet stations of Singaporean, Indian, Continental fare, as well as jewels from the sea and desserts to die for. Plus champagne and wine that flowed to drown all the yummies, natch! I swear you'd have gone on an intensive South Beach diet the following day.

Hostess of the affair was, as usual, the tall, elegant Kathy, who was a vision as she had always been, *palanggas* . She wore a summery cool cocktail outfit by **Jean Paul Gautier.** All the other gals showed up in their favorite couture outfits.

Okay, *palanggas*, let's go namedropping. In the party were **Tengku Adbullah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar,** chair of ING Insurance Berhad, KL, Malaysia; **Tengku Asman Sultan Abu Bakar; Ting Ayllon,** president and CEO of the Insular Life Assurance Co. Inc., and his wife, the popular and vivacious **Annie; Eddie Litonjua,** the president of the Litonjua Group of Companies, and his wife, **Gloria; Ernest Cuyegkeg,** chief finance officer of A. Soriano Corp.; **Charne Cuyegkeg;** in-demand architect **Anton Mendoza;** model **Marc San Diego; Andreas Sohnen Pao,** CEO of Worldwide Shipping of Singapore, and **Doris Sohnen Pao; Richard Eu,** group CEO, Eu Yan Sang International Limited, and **Mary Eu; Tony Chew,** chair Del Monte Inc.; **Roy Tirtadji,** vice chair Lippo Bank Indonesia, and **Monica Tirtadji;** and **James See,** director of Vision Capital Private Limited.

By 2:30 a.m., the band was still playing and the dance floor was rocking with the A-crowd, a rarity in Singapore's upper society. It made one Singaporean business tycoon comment, "I've never seen Singaporeans still dancing at this hour. Singapore's society will never be the same."

Needless to say, the following day, cool Bing de G. wasted no time in helping the needy by donating funds to his many favorite charity organizations and cultural foundations. Now, hey, that's the way to roll, *palanggas.*

RETO Guntli and Jenny Chua with Kathy

TOP interior designer Budji Layug

CYNTHIA Hofffer

BEN Santos

TALL, dashing Justin Reis

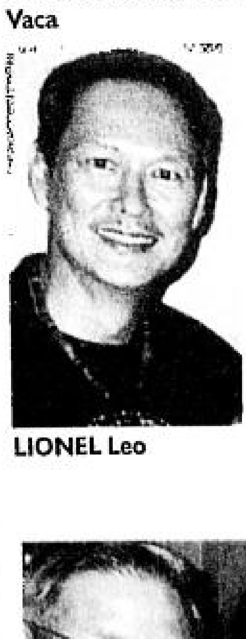
KONKOY Tuason

RAFFLES Hotel's mega CEO Jenny Chua

KAREN Santos, architect Anton Mendoza, Aida and Greg Marshall, and gorgeous Vivian Tan Vaca

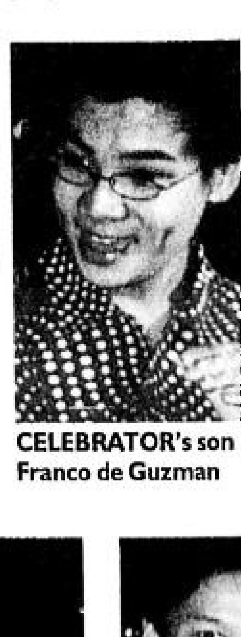
TINA Tan Leo

TENGKU Asman Sultan Abu Bakar and Dato Kamarudin Abu


LIONEL Leo

AL Bautista

AMANDA de G.


CELEBRATOR'S son Franco de Guzman

GREGGY Araneta

DOODIE Menchaca Tuason and Tengku Abdullah Ibni Alarhum Sultan Abu Bakar

MANILLE CONNECTION: Businessman Tonette Lagdameo with vibrant Cora Price, Sevi Santos, and architect and interior designer Ramon Antonio

INTERNATIONAL interior designer Bernard Teo, Bing de G., our very own Cinderella gal Therese Coronel Santos and May Filmerides

ABIGAIL Lesley Cruz (third from left) is crowned Miss Fort Ilocandia 2005 at the luxurious Fort Ilocandia Resort in Laoag, Ilocos Norte with (from left) Ma. Theresa Reyes, runner-up; Princess Wishell Van Eldik, runner-up; Mary Anne Dimaya, 1st runner-up; and Kristine Marie Lim, 3rd runner-up. Miss Fort Ilocandia, one of the most prestigious beauty pageants today, produced such notables as actress Francine Prieto (2nd runner-up, 2003) and Miss Philippines 2nd runner-up Lesley Jean Samson (1st runner-up, 2003).

CHARITY VISIT
Candidates in Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Philipines (MHTIP) 2005 will grace the "Ohana Moments" children's party on Sunday, March 6, at the University of Santo Tomas garden organized by the Philippine National Hemophilia Center (PNHC) Foundation. The candidates are shown with the foundation's officers and members. Seated: Dr. Edmund Advincula; Dr. John Ong; MHTIP chair Ancie Pamintuan-Santos; PNHC president Dr. Mary Ng-Chua; Dr. Flerida Hernando; Dr. Charina Batac; and Dr. Janelle Liwanag. Standing are Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Philippines 2005 candidates and MHTIP finance director Alexei Reyes. The PNHC Foundation is the beneficiary of the Miss Hawaiian Tropic International 2005 beauty pageant presented by Smart Addict Mobile Prepaid (AMP) on March 10 at the NBC Tent, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The pageant is produced by Independent Talent and Entertainment Management (Item) and NBC.

SARA LEE LAUNCHES NUTRIMETICS DEFENSE AGE PREVENTION FACE CRÉME

Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, one of the country's premiere direct selling companies, proudly introduces its latest breakthrough in anti-aging skincare technology: the Nutrimetics Ultra Care+ Defense Age Prevention Face Créme.

With its innovative, patented blend of advanced high-technology and natural ingredients, Nutrimetics Defense helps slow down the aging process by reducing the damaging effects of sunlight.

Scientific research has proven that sunlight causes two-thirds of skin aging by taking its toll on the skin's texture, tone and overall elasticity. This is specifically caused by UV-A radiation that penetrates the deeper layers of the skin, affecting collagen and elastin fibers that provide skin firmness.

Nutrimetics Defense slows down the aging process by providing stable UV-A and UV-B filters that block radiation and limit sunburn and its related negative effects, such as skin darkening. It also has a proprietary, patented anti-oxidant vitamin complex that goes deep into the skin's layers through a penetration enhancer. Moisturizers and skin-compatible lipids also help normalize the skin's barrier function, thereby reducing skin dryness.

Simply put, Nutrimetics Defense acts like a shield that stays over the skin all day. It deflects harmful ultraviolet light, slows down the aging process by more than 50% and helps keep its users looking twice as young.

Nutrimetics has prospered from a small company established in 1961 to become Australia and New Zealand's premiere beauty and direct selling company. With the purchase of Nutrimetics in 1997, Sara Lee infused strong marketing capabilities and resources with Nutrimetics expertise to build the world's most sophisticated line of naturally-enriched, environmentally-responsible skincare and cosmetics.

nutrimetics
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DEFENSE
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The latest anti-aging solution exlusively distributed by Sara Lee Direct Selling.

Sara Lee Corporation is one of the world's leading companies in branded consumer packaged goods, selling its products in nearly 200 countries.

In the Philippines, Sara Lee Direct Selling's line of prestigious brands include Playtex, Hanes, Hanes Her Way, Wonderbra, Barely There, Just My Size, Girls' Attitudes, Champion, Colour Collection, Beauty Touch, Ivana, Georgie On Ice, VS. Versus, Nutrimetics, Sanex, Zwitsal, Pickwick Tea, Moccona and Douwe Egberts Coffee.

For inquiries, call their Hotline at 810-5402, or send e-mail to: customer.relations@saraleedirectselling.ph

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everyday!

Sisters?

It's a mom with her daughter. Their secret? Nutrimetics Ultra Care+ Defense Age Prevention Face Creme. Prevents skin ageing, due to sun damage, by as much as 50%.

Nutrimetics Ultra Care+ Defense Age Prevention Face Creme is another quality brand from Sara Lee Direct Selling. Interested? **Call 810-5402 or email customer.relations@saraleedirectselling.ph**

Other Sara Lee Direct Selling Brands: Hanes, Hanes Her Way, Wonderbra, Barely There, Just My Size, Girls' Attitudes, Champion, Colour Collection, Beauty Touch, Ivana, Georgie On Ice, VS.Versus, Sanex, Zwitsal, Pickwick, Moccona, Douwe Egberts.

Don't be fooled by false texts.

abc
Sun Cellular celebrates its 1 million subscribers. Pass this message to 15 Sun subscribers to get 30 days extension on your 24/7 account. Per DTI Permit # 6019 Series of 2005.

abc
Sun Cellular's 24/7 will end on Feb 2005. Please pass to all Sun users for the petition in making 24/7 permanent. The spread of this message will be monitored.

abc
Due to a scheduled system upgrade, SUN CEL users will be given free P200 load. Just pass this msg to 10 Sun users. Check your balance after doing so.

Sun Cellular sets things straight.

There are text messages using the Sun Cellular name claiming 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited will end soon. There are also false promotional messages circulating that promise rewards for passing them on. These are untrue.

These unauthorized text messages are instigated by certain parties who put their personal and business interests above the consumer's welfare. These fabricated messages have no use but to confuse our Sun Cellular subscribers, raise false expectations and more importantly, congest our network.

Clearly, these said parties do not want the 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service to succeed.

We advise you to please ignore these messages as they are meant to mislead you.

We therefore reiterate that Sun Cellular does not do pass-on text promotions.

For valid Sun Cellular promotions, please call 200 using your Sun Cellular phone or visit our website at www.suncellular.com.ph.

We remain committed in providing you with the best value service you deserve, in the spirit of fair and healthy competition.

Thank you for your continued patronage.

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LIFESTYLE

Yes, you are so
SINGLE!
Ship sails on May 15, 2005! So join now!
You can even win this trip for free if you register and reserve within January 18 to March 10, 2005!
Log on to www.itzamatch.com

Welcome to Mulberry Online
BFC Accessory Designer of the Year, 2004

mulberry.com

Those who appreciate excellent quality and craftsmanship will enjoy browsing through this site. Mulberry is a British design company that originally manufactured luxury bags such as the Roxanne and Bayswater, now considered fashion classics. The company has grown and diversified to other areas such as womenswear, menswear and interior design, and continue to produce pieces that are superbly made by local craftsmen and artisans.

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Fetish
More Shopping >>
Home | Shopping Cart |
| Sign in | New user | Profile | Update
Product Search
All Products
Search
Fashion Accessories
Add to Cart

namaste.com

Peruse traditional and affordable Indian offerings like Kundan and Lac jewelry sets, which can lend your basic wardrobe an exotic touch. You can also purchase henna powder (used to color hair or create mehndi body art or tattoos), bindis (stick-on jewelry usually worn on the forehead) and other unusual fashion accessories to spice up your look.

More affordable online shopping

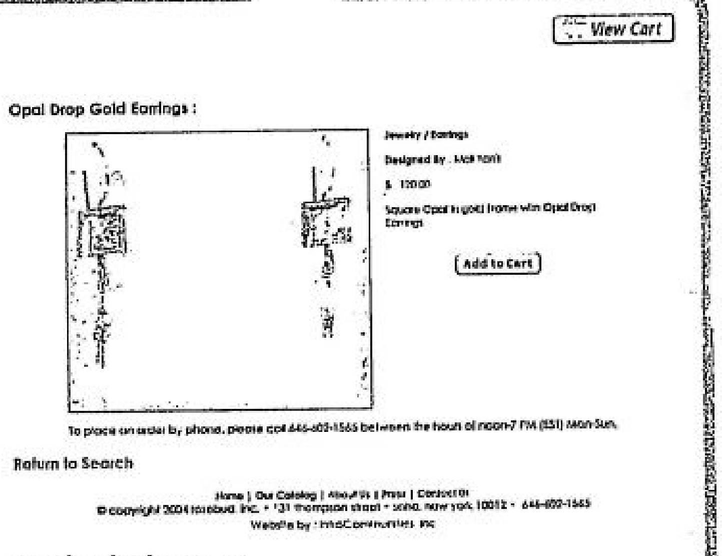
APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

Check out these sites for appealing but less expensive options

BASED on the response to last Friday's feature on online shopping, I decided to share some more interesting websites that you might enjoy visiting.

MORE/ E4


View Cart
Opal Drop Gold Earrings :
Jewelry / Earrings
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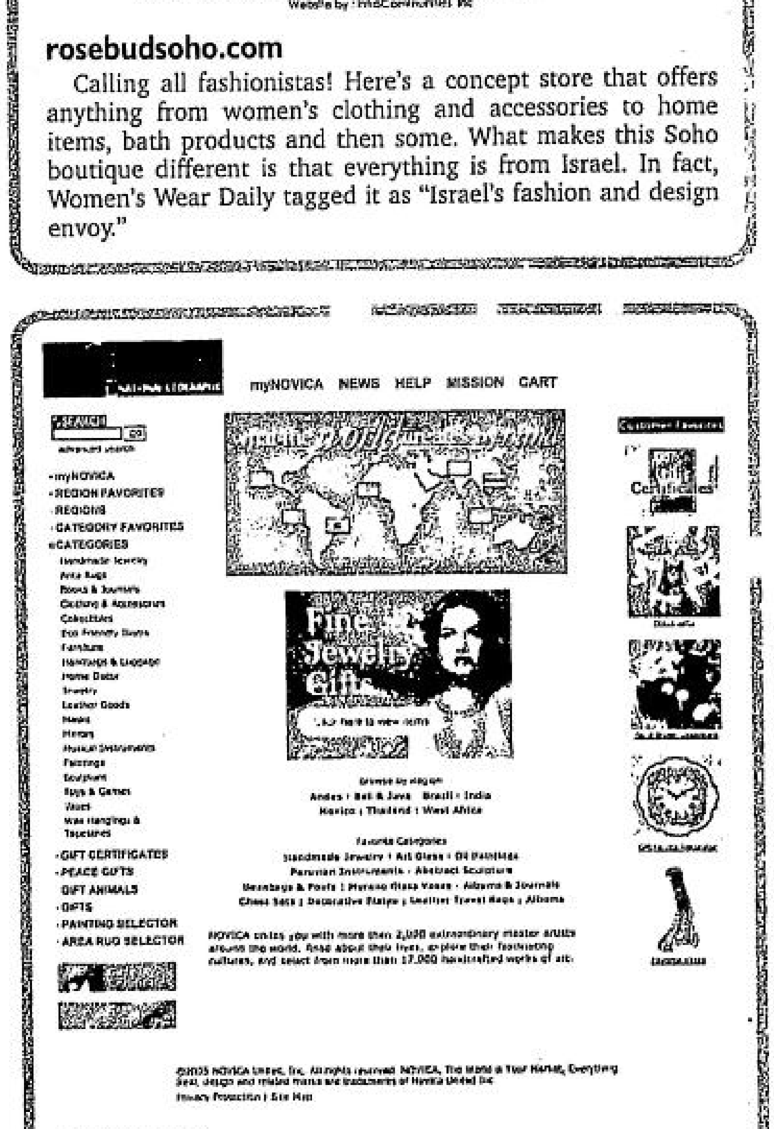
Return to Search
Home | Our Catalog | About Us | Press | Contact Us

rosebudsoho.com

Calling all fashionistas! Here's a concept store that offers anything from women's clothing and accessories to home items, bath products and then some. What makes this Soho boutique different is that everything is from Israel. In fact, Women's Wear Daily tagged it as "Israel's fashion and design envoy."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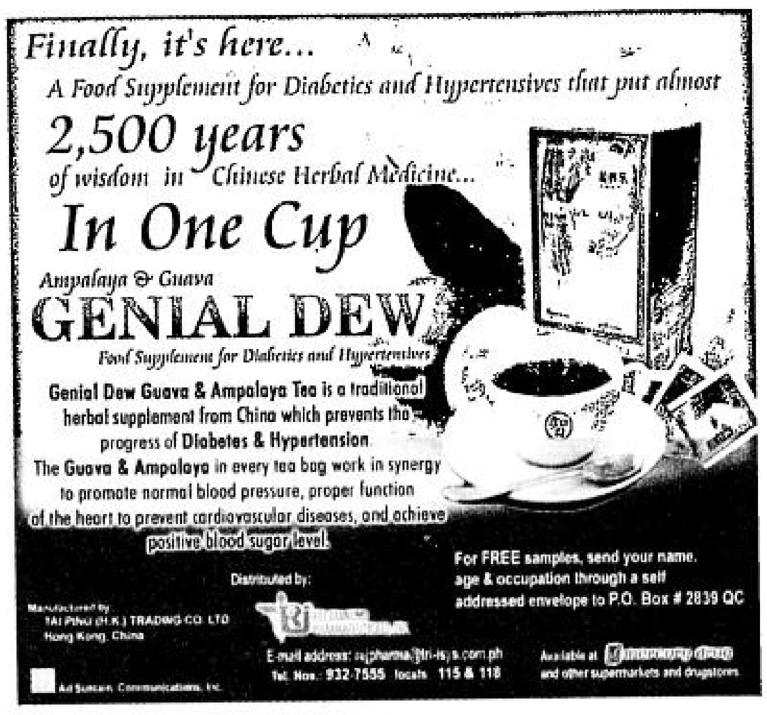
GIFT CERTIFICATES
PEACE GIFTS
GIFT ANIMALS
GIFTS
PAINTING SELECTOR
AREA RUG SELECTOR
Fine Jewelry Gift
Andes | Bali & Java | Brazil | India
Mexico | Thailand | West Africa

novica.com

All it takes to shop around the world is this site. Travel by region (from the Andes to Bali) or browse according to category. Check out its offerings such as handmade jewelry, leather travel bags, art glass, paintings, sculptures and a "boho" selection of clothing and accessories.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2,500 years
of wisdom in Chinese Herbal Medicine...
In One Cup
Ampalaya & Guava
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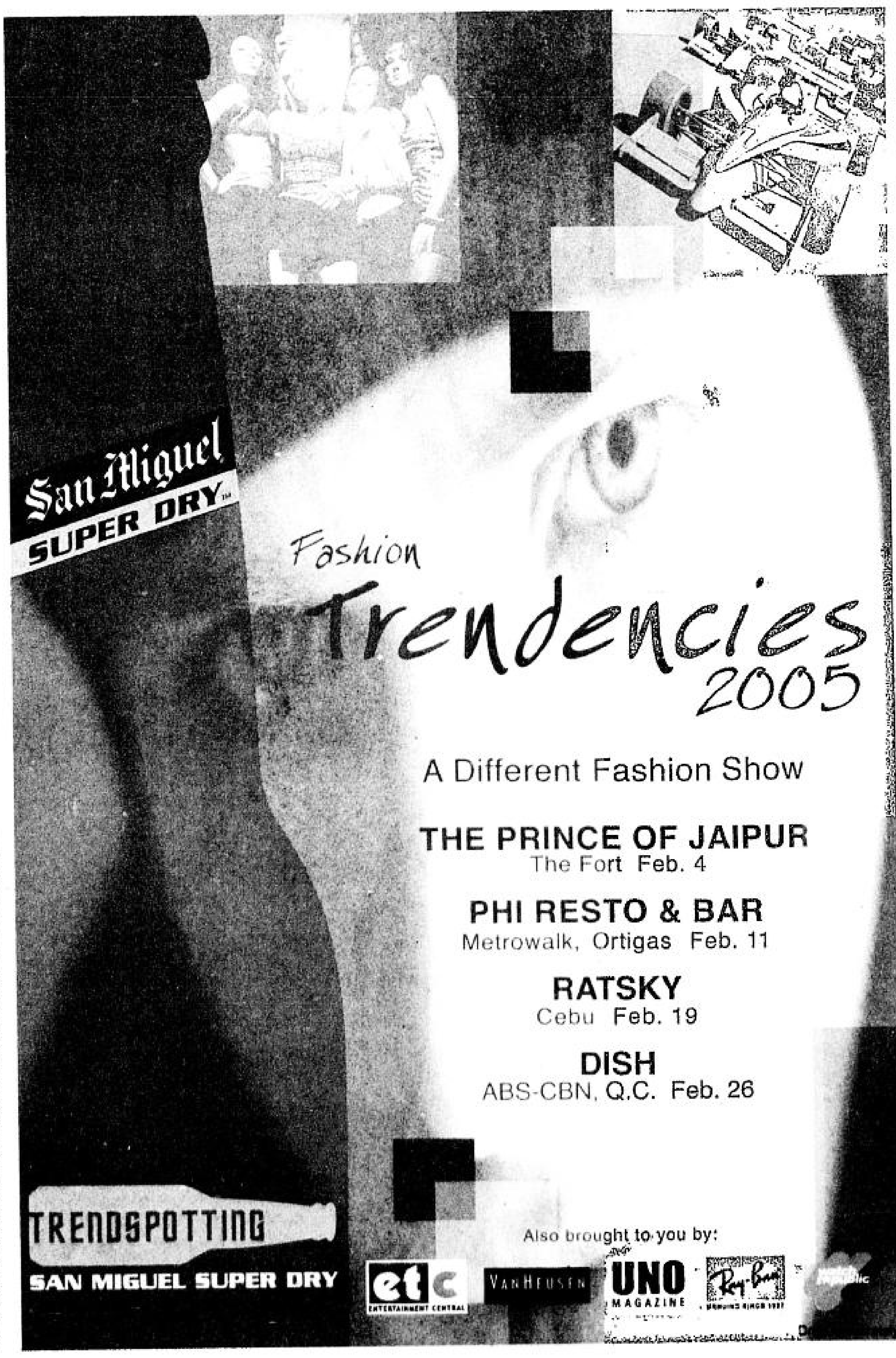
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Watch out for the first Trendspotting event, Fashion Trendencies 2005 this February brought to you by the premium beer that's right for you. San Miguel Super Dry.

OUTFIT from Paul Smith's Autumn/Winter Collection 2005-2006 AFP

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LONDON FASHION WEEK

Treasure trov from the past

LONDON—Paul Smith stood out with his autumn/winter 2005-2006 fare, maintaining his fetish for well-tailored pieces while also trawling the '60s and '70s for standout statement pieces.

Unlike his spring-summer season, which indulged in a harmonious riot of stripe and floral print, this collection was much more about individual items that looked as if they emerged from the time capsule of a hippie and were then touched up by a modernist.

Among the items worthy of note, a swinging orange cape, a pleated plaid knee-high skirt with sequin designs a
earth-goddess embroidered
from crushed velvet, snakesk

Even the colors gave a post
or glow to the show, with bu
paired with brown coats, lay
yellows, or marigold and s
tions.

Glittering through winter gloom

CLOTHES from Basso and Brooke's Autumn/Winter Collection AFP

LONDON—Somewhere between your grandmother's wardrobe and a disco queen's get-up, Julien Macdonald found his stride at the London Fashion Week with an autumn/winter 2005-6 collection matching body-sculpting suits, fur coats and the designer's famous slinky gowns.

But hot on his heels, upstarts Basso and Brooke staged a gorgeous first-ever show for the British catwalk, reminding an awestruck audience that though it cannot rival Paris and Milan in fame, London is all about the young and cutting-edge.

Macdonald returned to the hits of his last spring/summer show, with glittering metal maille and knits—like knee-length cables out of the 1950s, but updated in gold and worn over a frilly dress.

He showed no fear of fur, using wide, dramatic collars on jackets that were cinched with a jeweled elastic waistband and matching arm bands.

In a wicked wink at British politics, where a ban on fox hunting is set to take force next week, the Welshman used Lizzie Jagger—daughter of Rolling Stone Mick—to wear one of his over-the-shoulder fur stoles... of a red fox.

Beneath the furry critters, knit sweaters shone with sequins, beads and their metallic threads, in a worthy relook of the traditional fabrics of the cold months.

The sweaters and V- and scoop-necked vests were worn tight like a schoolboy's and paired with frilly blouses that bunched at the sleeve and brought a bit of color to the solid hues of winter—gray, beige, burgundy.

Pants went up, in high-waisted, hip-hugging pinstripe trousers, and down, as knickers—complete with buttons at the knee—in black velvet and lame.

In line with recycling the best from the past, supermodel Naomi Campbell was back on the runway, looking stunning in slinky lame dresses with age-defying cling power.

This season of globe-trotting shows, which began in New York last week, has seen a resurgence in the spotlight of supermodels once known exclusively by their first names—Cindy (Crawford), Linda (Evangelista) and Naomi among them.

New talent

Backstage rumors circulated about Macdonald's imminent departure for a rival fashion capital but the following show at Basso and Brooke proved that new talent springs eternal here.

The Anglo-Brazilian duo of Christopher Brooke and Bruno Basso won the Fashion Fringe award last year as off-schedule designers, with a range of outrageous, sexually explicit prints, and were given a spot on this season's catwalk.

Their autumn-winter

NAOMI Campbell in Julien MacDonald AFP

JULIEN Macdonald AP

look was equally decadent, with mod
in coordinated prints from blouse t
glove to shoe, and with samurai-li
signs including long braids that coul
like swords and tree branches st
antlers above the head.

Instead of phallic print designs, ho
used motifs inspired by a "medieval p
cluding ornate gold chains and hera
erally wrapped around the body, in
and clingy leggings.

London, always struggling to co
the more prestigious ready-to-wea
Milan and Paris, once again lost mo
seasonal hazard that has already sc
dus of the likes of Alexander McQ
Galliano, Hussein Chalayan, Stella
Phoebe Philo and Ozwald Boateng.

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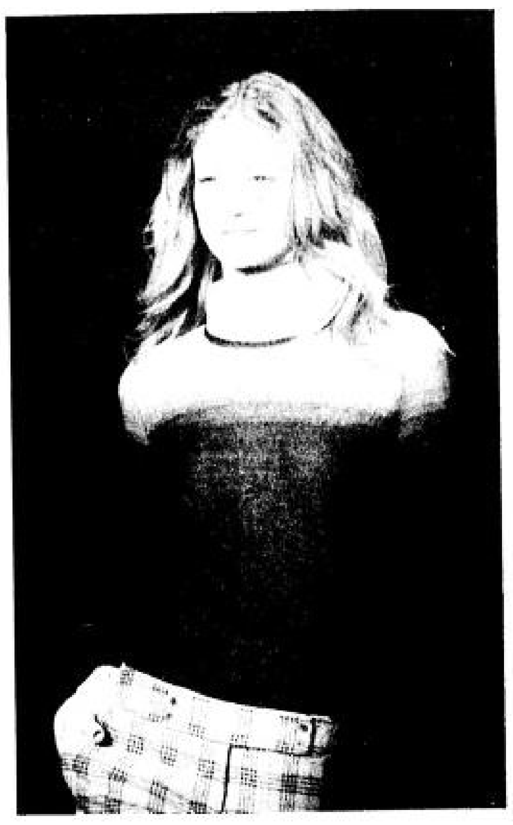

REUTERS

FASHION designer Paul Smith acknowledges the audience as he walks down the catwalk at the conclusion of his Autumn-Winter 2005-06 show. AFP

ve

Fur steals the show but so do the technicolor glow of Paul Smith's line and the edgy youth of Basso and Brooke

t the waist, an
caftan made
n skinny jeans.
1968 technicol-
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JULIEN Macdonald AP

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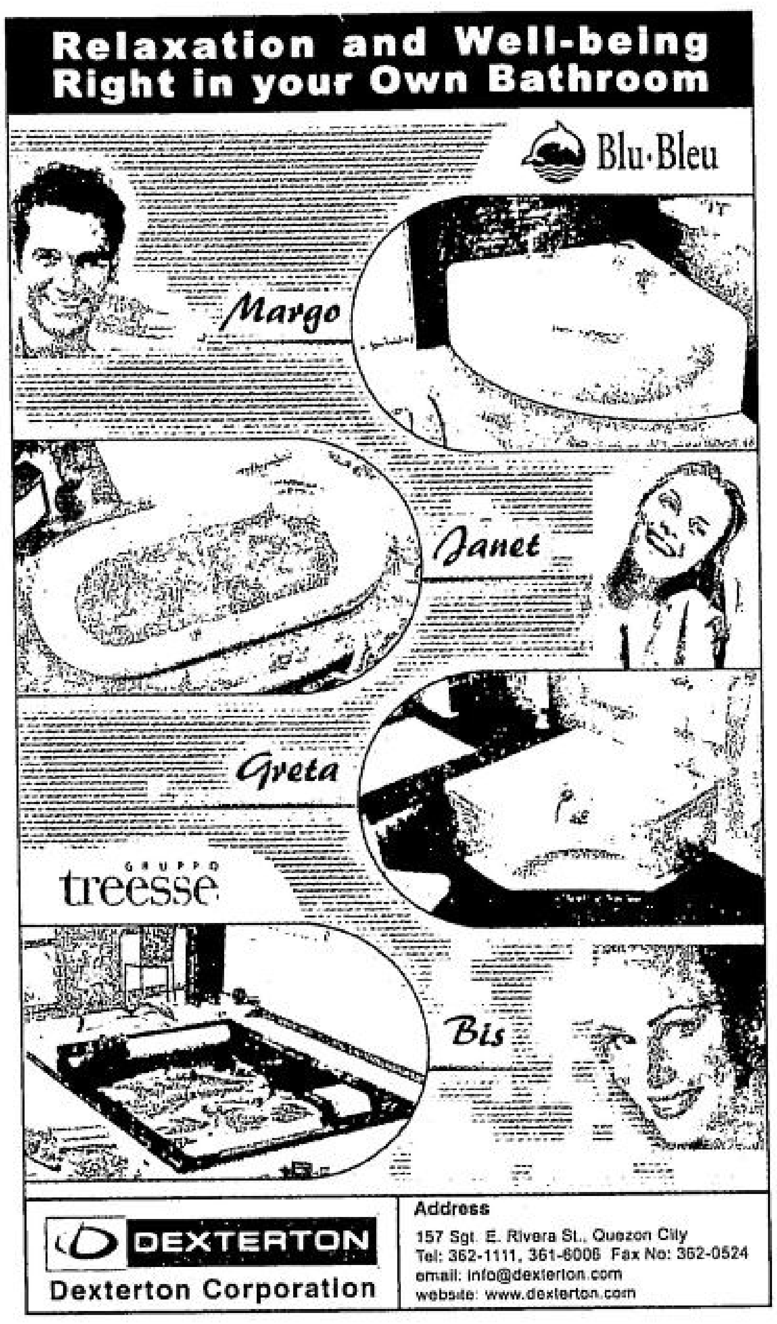

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More affordable online shopping

From page E1

Quite a number of readers wrote that they enjoyed the sites I wrote about but found them a bit too expensive. So, I tried to research on more affordable net shopping via sites like namaste.com and novica.com.

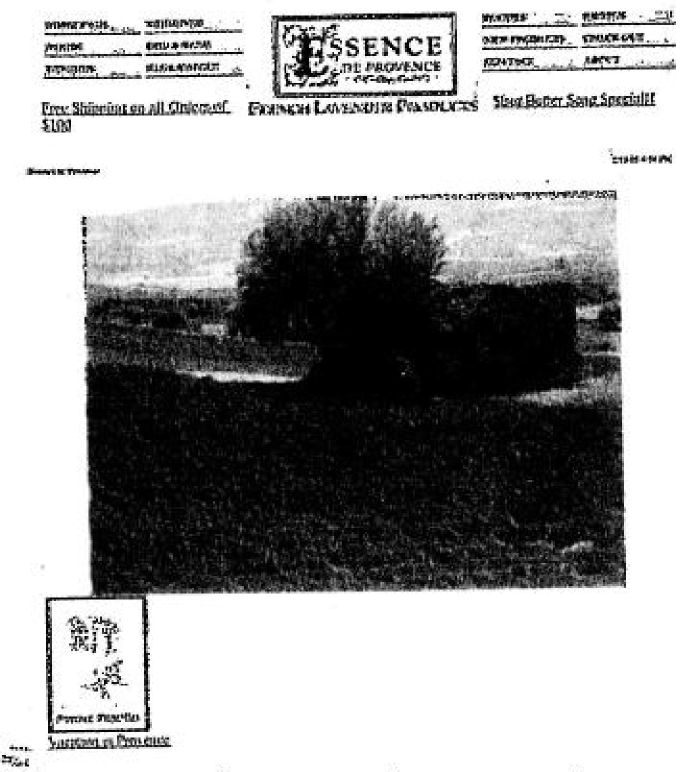
Keep in mind that it's a good idea to check for special offers and sale items periodically so that you can avail of good quality merchandise at affordable prices. Or check out eBay, where you can find most anything and offer to pay only up to how much you can afford.

Incidentally, a reader and savvy online shopper advised me that there is a way to pay for eBay purchases from the Philippines. Simply log on to www.bidpay.com and register your credit card in their secure site. Whatever expenses you incur will be charged to your card.

Meanwhile, the company will pay the seller on your behalf via a Western Union branded money order. Most sellers accept money orders so that should not be a problem.

Check out these sites for more appealing online options:

Email the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com



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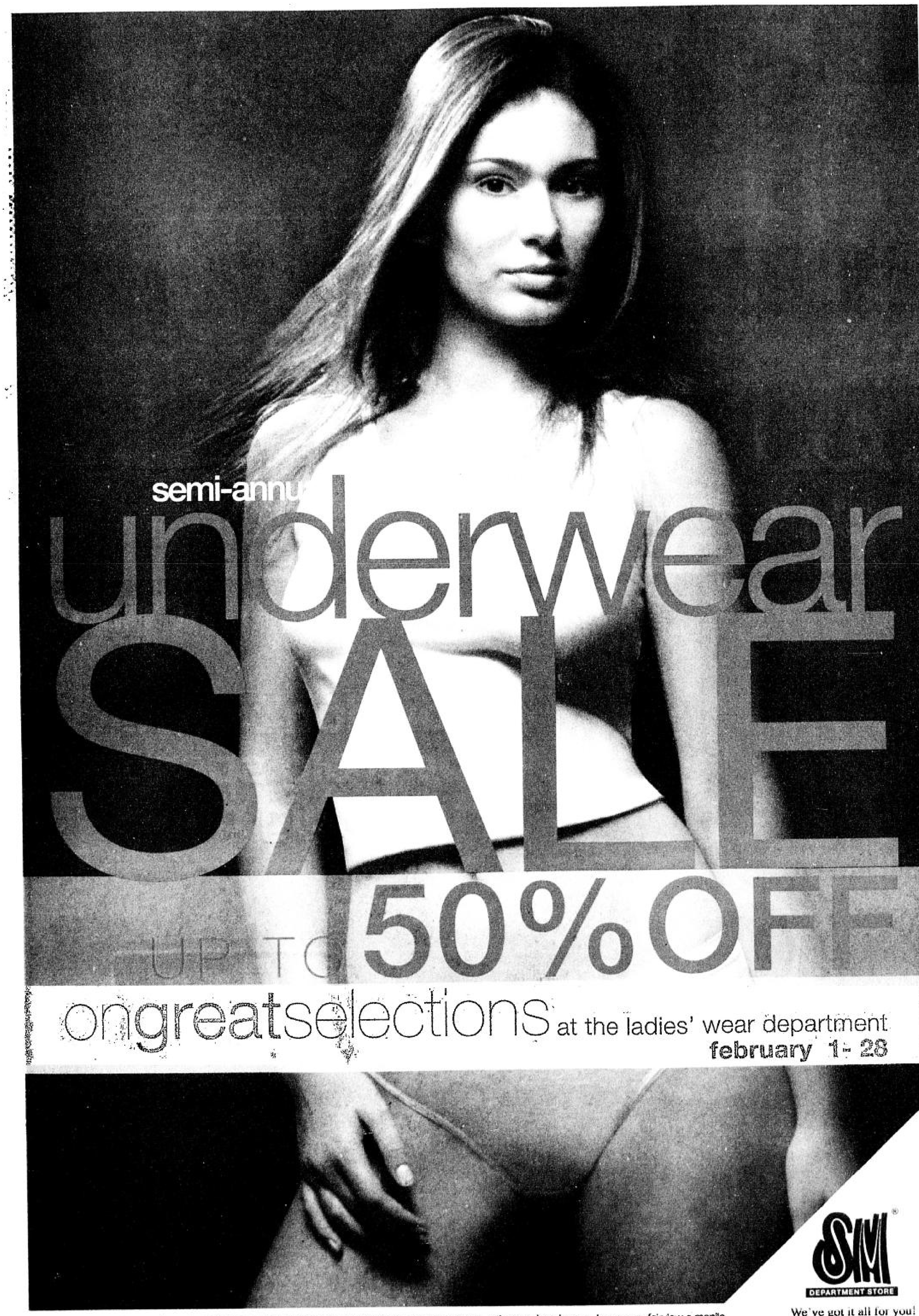
COOL STYLE

Owning an Oakley need not be expensive. With the Fat Cat and Warden (above), one can enjoy the same uncompromising performance and cool styling that made Oakley a leading eyewear brand. The new models are available only at Stoked at Power Plant Mall in Rockwell, Makati City, and Sessions at The Podium in Pasig City.



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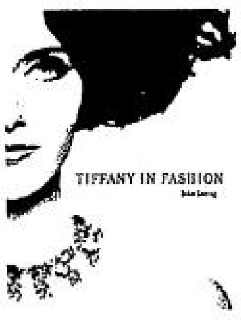

Timeless gems, iconic photos

TIFFANY & Co. opened its recently expanded boutique in Shangri-La Tower with a cocktail reception attended by prominent social figures, Tiffany guests and key people from Manila's media industry.

The reception also highlighted "Tiffany in Fashion: A Study of American Fashion and Fashion Photography (1933-2003)," by Tiffany Design Director John Loring.

The coffee-table book chronicles the era's great fashion designers and photographers who created classic images of socialites, celebrity models and Hollywood film stars wearing magnificent Tiffany jewels. These historic images helped establish Tiffany's reputation as a world-renowned house of jewelry.

The designs presented in the book included Tiffany Jazz, a collection of diamonds and platinum inspired by jewels from the Tiffany & Co. Archives. Diamonds also shape the universal symbol for love and romance in Tiffany Hearts™. Models also wore the boldly styled Tiffany Mark™ T-57 timepiece.

"Mr. Loring's book beautifully captures Tiffany's important role in fashion over the past 70 years," said Tiffany & Co. Director Akram Eldemachki. "Tonight's showing of current jewels demonstrates that Tiffany continues to be at the forefront of fashion and glamour."

The evening also introduced the latest jewelry designs in the Tiffany Atlas™ collection, inspired by the Atlas clock's strong, sleek Roman numerals, and the Atlas® watch, an icon of style.

"Tiffany In Fashion" and the Tiffany Atlas™ collection are exclusively available at Tiffany & Co. store in Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza and Rustan's Makati.

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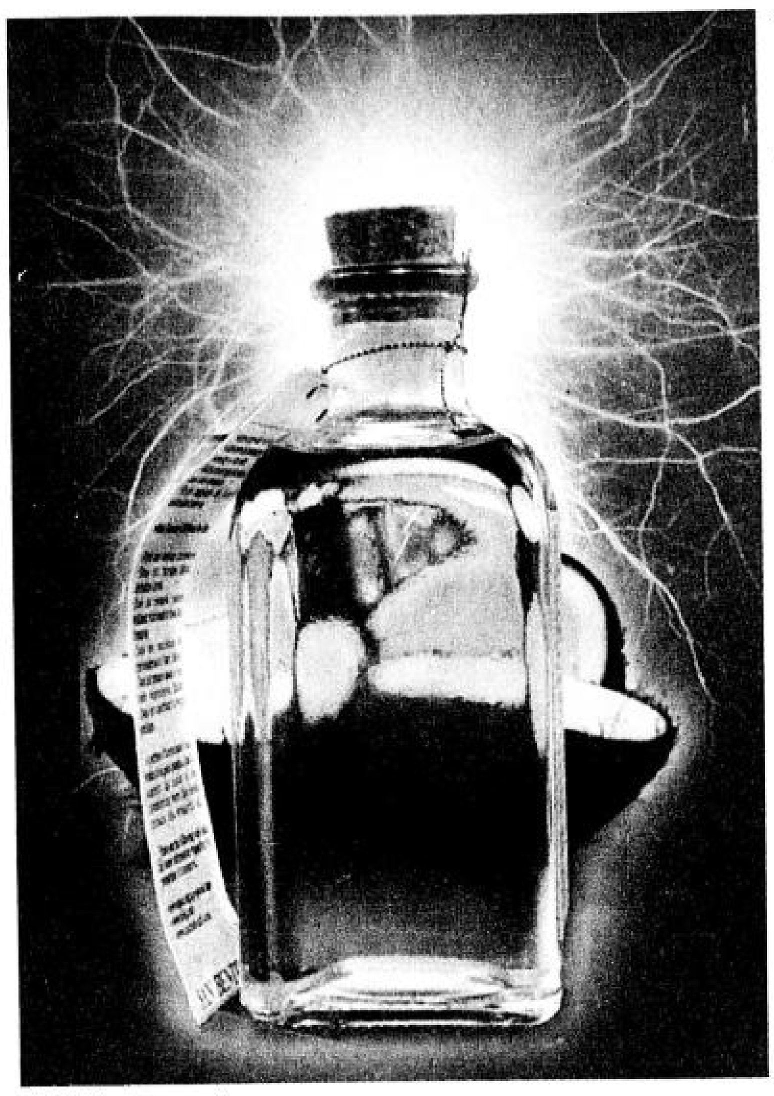
REMEMBRANCE
of treasures past /E2



VIRGIN coconut oil

Why virgin coconut oil is so in vogue

What was once shunned is now hailed in a 'fat forgiveness' atmosphere

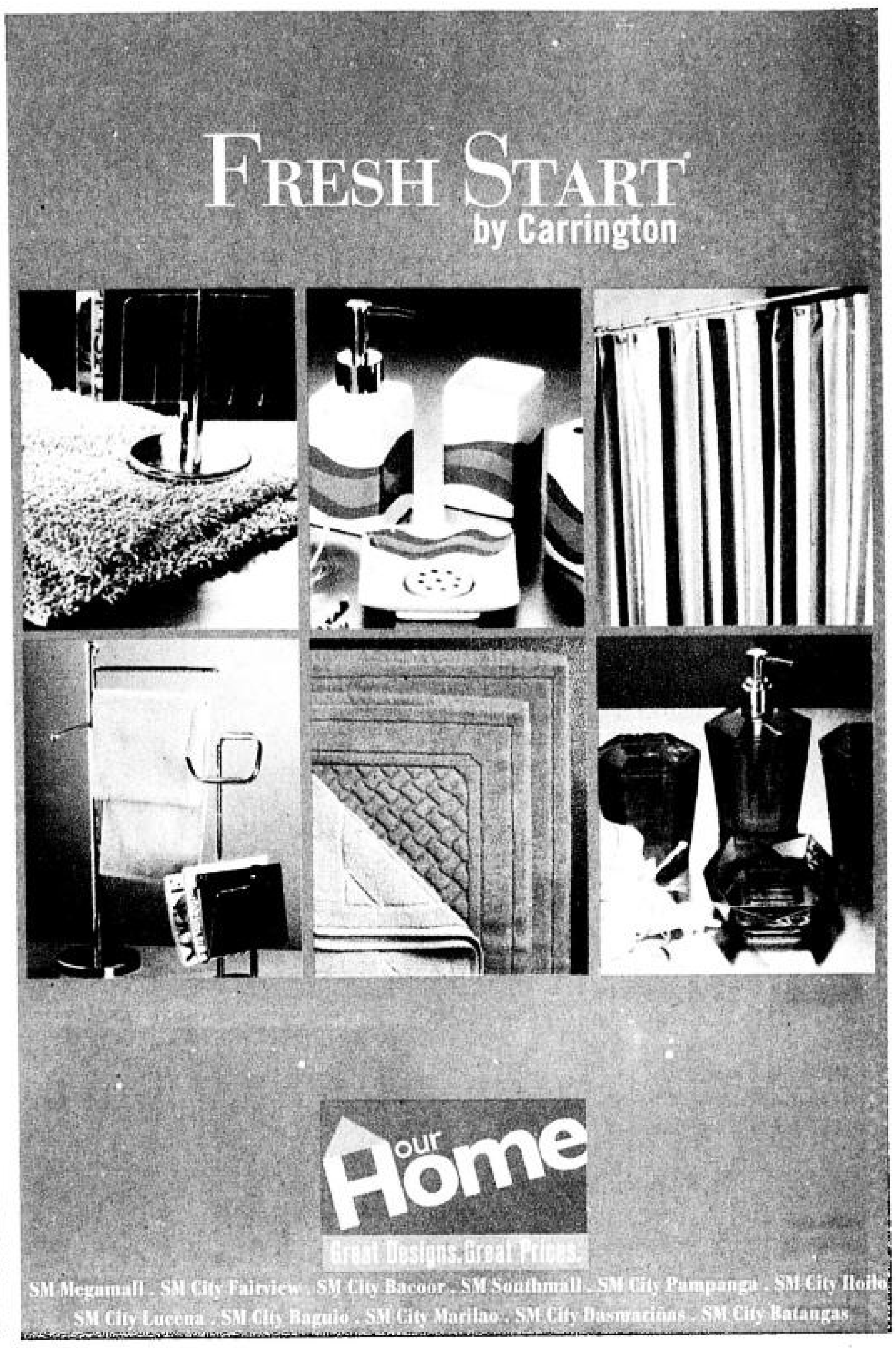
LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

WHEN I saw my buff kid (who's not a kid anymore, but then, what mom would admit to that?) pluck a bottle of virgin coconut oil off the supermarket shelf and put it in our cart, I knew it's time to write about coconut oil—"virgin, it has to be virgin, Mom," my son tells me—as a beauty and health trend that's getting hotter.

If health- and physique-conscious kids like my son are now taking coconut oil, then this "fatty oil" has been rehabilitated into the mainstream, in the eyes of a generation that has been raised to dread the three-let-

WHY/ F4



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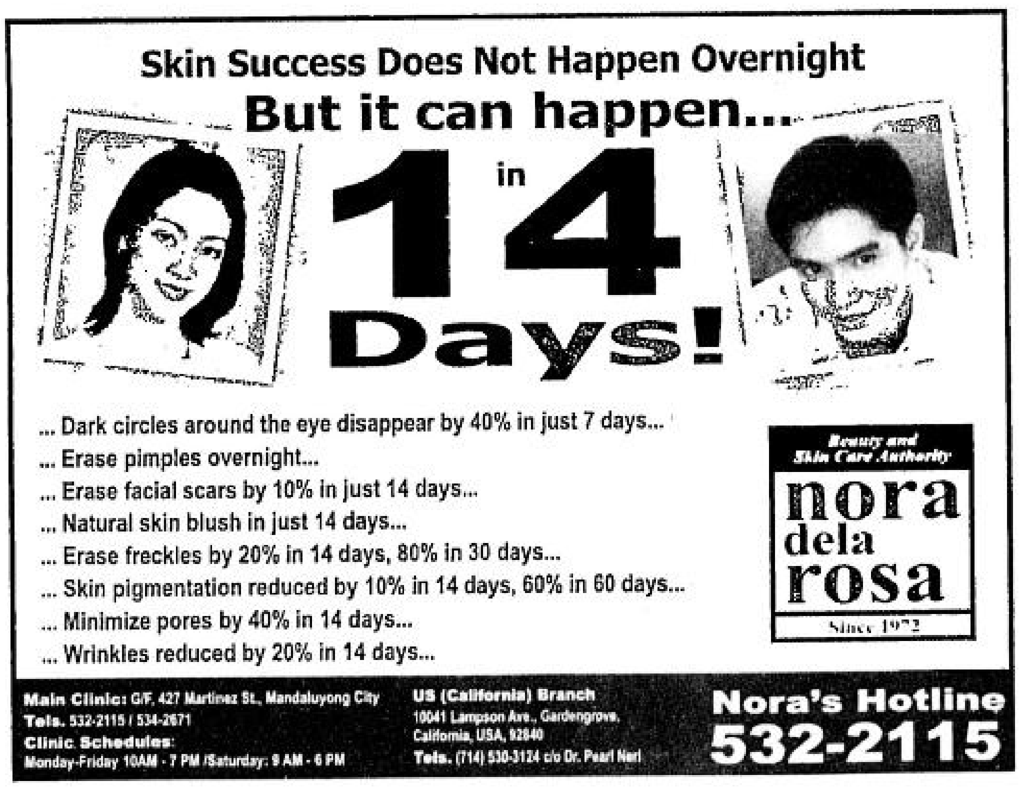

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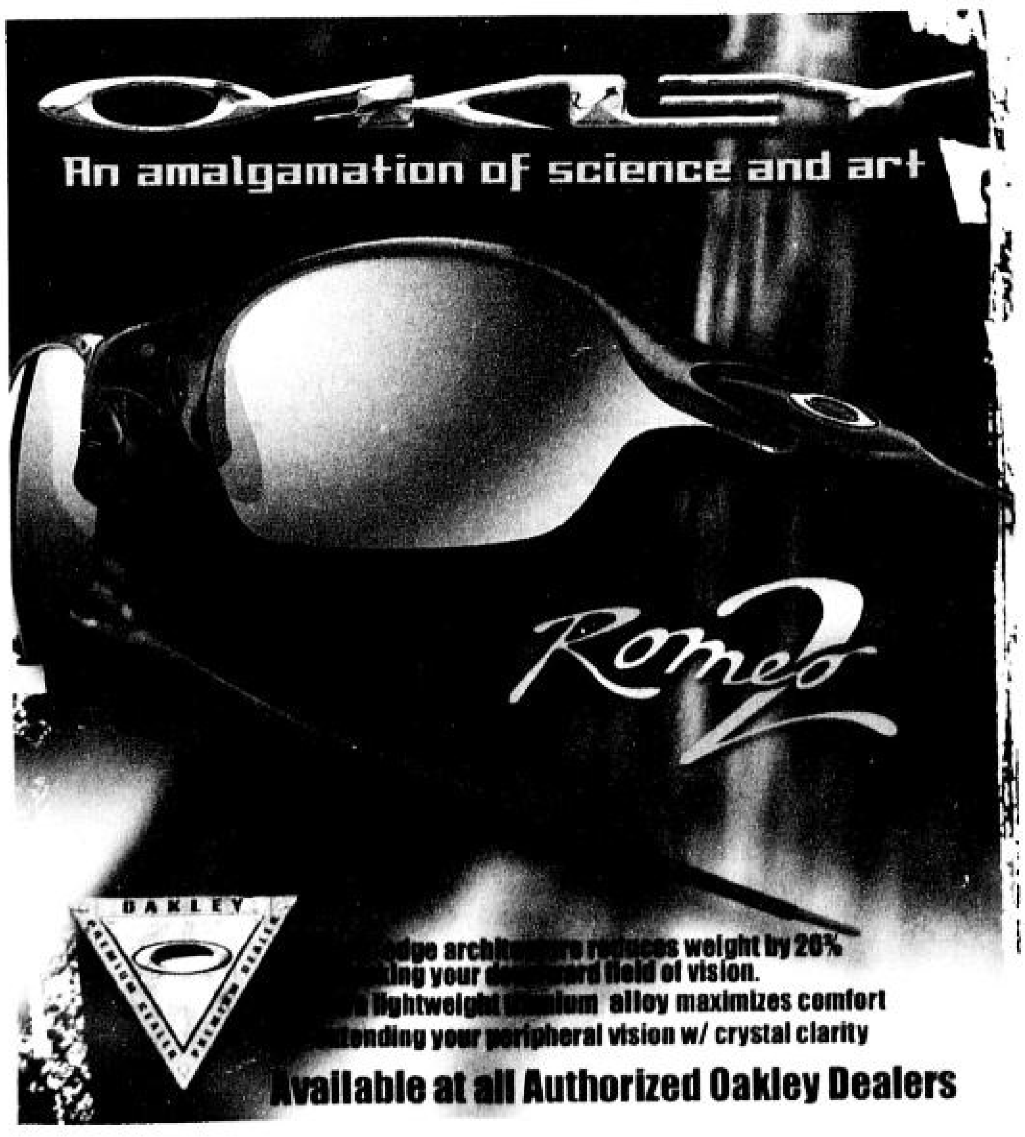

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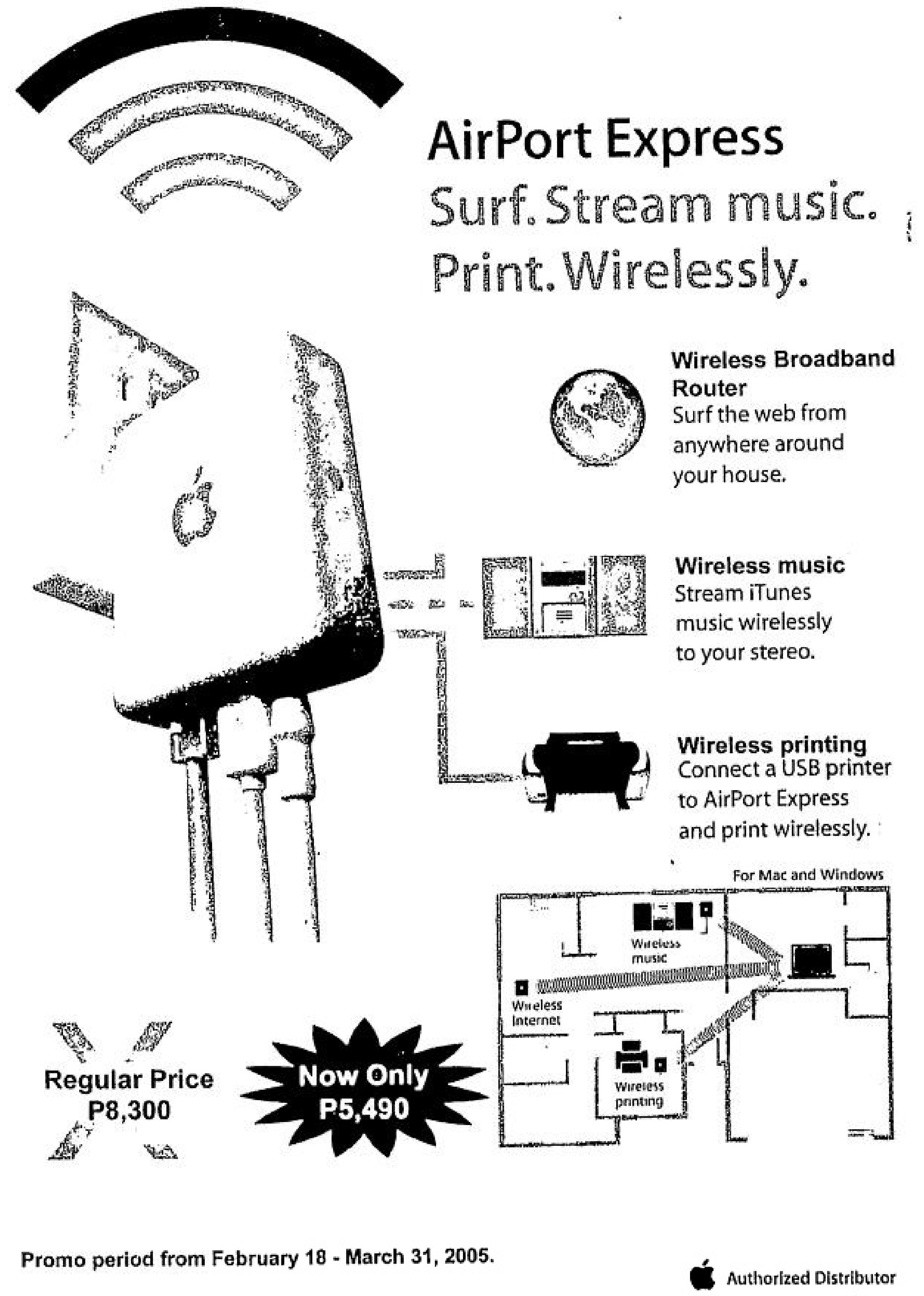

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PAOLA Vega

CARINA Carlos

MEG Seranilla

Learn proper makeup techniques

ROBINSONS Department Store (RDS) is holding a beauty fair until Feb. 28.

Shoppers can take advantage of the opportunity to consult experts on how to enhance their looks with the right makeup techniques.

Among those who availed of the fair's "offer" was Carina Carlos, 22, working girl. A *chinita*, RDS first used foundation nearest to her skintone then added a darker foundation just below her cheekbones. Blended well, the combination gave her "high" cheekbones.

Lilac eye shadow was applied to her brow bone and eyelid. White eyeliner was used below the lower lashes to make Carlos' eyes seem bigger. Brown eyeliner was added to the top eyelid for more definition.

Soft pink blush was applied to her cheeks and pink glossy lipstick on her lips. A final powder touch-up completed the look.

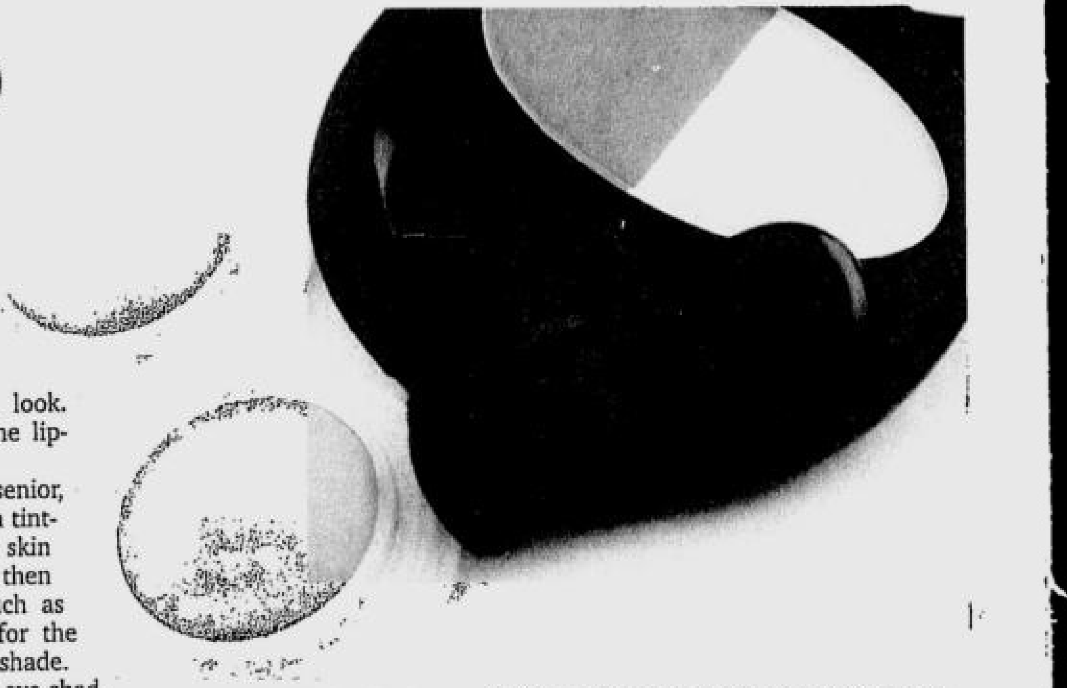
Meg Seranilla, 25, music major, is fair-skinned with a round-shaped face. RDS used a foundation nearest to her skintone. A soft pink base was applied to her eyelid up to the brow bone and lightly above her lower eyelashes. A darker shade of pink was applied up to the eyes' creases.

Brown eyeliner was used (brown looks more natural when used with fairer skin types) to define the shape of Seranilla's eyes. A touch of pink blush, pink lipstick and light powder completed the look. Gloss was applied over the lipstick to add extra shine.

Paola Vega, 21, college senior, is *kayumanggi*. RDS used a tinted moisturizer nearest her skin tone. Bronzer powder was then applied. Natural tints, such as soft browns, were used for the eyes starting with a lighter shade.

A soft brown or bronze eye shadow was then blended up to the crease. Blush-on was tapped lightly to the cheeks. For the lips, glossy or semi-matte lipstick was used. For that extra glow, a highlighting powder was used as finishing touch.

RDS says there are no hard and fast rules about how to look good. What is important is to enhance features by finding the perfect hues for a particular skin tone and by experimenting with the appropriate makeup.



SHISEIDO's blush duo in soft pinks and Maybelline's single blush-on in different colors

HAIR highs for 2005. Pantene Pro-V with Amino Pro-V complex

Hair trends for 2005

JUDE Hipolito, creative director of Kaizen Salon, gives a glimpse of hair trends this year.

Hipolito says, aside from creating new styles, the salon also tries to revitalize a tired and outdated look, turning it into a chic, easy-to-manage style that will blend with any trend.

NINA with stylist Jude Hipolito, creative director of Kaizen Salon

Romantic look

Characterized by large, luscious waves and curls, this style was inspired by the very feminine '50s era. Loose and uneven ends are carefully trimmed. Color livens up dark strands. The result is an almost angelic look with soft flowing curls perfectly framing a delicate face.

Rebellious or sporty look

Women's adventurous spirit is translated into funky and wild hairstyle characterized by unconventional cuts complemented by wild colors and bold streaks. The styles are meant to be fuss-free.

An asymmetrical cut emphasizes the texture of hair.

Constructive look

This is all about precision cutting and less about color and style. Fine straight hair is trimmed into concave, textured layers with asymmetrical bangs, resulting in a classy and timeless cut that can be styled in many ways.

Hipolito adds that, aside from getting a new hairstyle, women should properly care for and maintain their hair. He says no fancy hairstyle can hide damaged hair. The right shampoo and conditioner should be part of a daily hair care regimen. To keep hair shiny, healthy and strong, he recommends those with Pro-Vitamin B5 such as Pantene Pro-V with Amino Pro-V Complex. The unique formula helps revive hair and restore its strength and beauty.

Kaizen Salon has branches at 6/F Penthouse, Sycamore Centre Building, Alabang (8508828), and the Courtyard, 26 Sgt. Esguerra St., South Triangle, Quezon City (9285588).

ROMANTIC Look, modeled by Nina Gomez

CONSTRUCTIVE Look, modeled by Ornussa Cadness (above left); Rebellious Sporty Look, modeled by Angelica Valenzuela (above)

CHARLES Dujic

International celebrity hairstylist visits RP

NO LESS than Hollywood's stylist to the stars, Charles Dujic, has been commissioned by Sunsilk to use his cutting and styling prowess to create split-ends-free hairstyles for the Filipina.

Dujic, a licensed hairdresser, has done the glam scene and worked on the now celebrated looks of Cate Blanchett, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Vanessa Carlton and Sela Ward, to name a few. He has also styled top models for fashion editorials across the globe (Australian Vogue, Spanish Vogue, Mademoiselle, Elle, L' Uomo Vogue, Sports Illustrated).

Prior to his current career, Dujic was both a ramp and commercial model for seven years, gracing the international fashion scene.

Sunsilk has partnered with the award-winning hairstylist to showcase Sunsilk's Strength and Shine Shampoo, the first-ever hair care shampoo made especially to prevent hair damage. The new product has lemon and kiwi vita-complex, which prevents split ends.

Dujic arrives in the country Feb. 26. His program includes a press conference, a glitzy Hair Ball to be attended by Manila's top stylists and social registry, and a live demonstration on March 7 of the new Sunsilk Split Ends-Free Hairstyles at the Hair Asia event at the World Trade Center.

Billboard beauty is 96 years young

LONDON—It's never too late to start a new career, even if you're 96 years old—and the new job is modeling cosmetics.

Irene Sinclair, a Guyana-born pensioner living in London, is appearing on billboards around Britain this month, wrinkles and all, to help sell Dove, a popular brand of facial cream.

"I've never felt beautiful in my life, but I feel I am now," said Sinclair, quoted in the Daily Mirror newspaper. "It's all about growing old gracefully."

Her secret? "I don't stay indoors," she said. "I try and get fresh air as much as I can by going for walks."

Sinclair is the latest of a number of women—including a half-dozen with "real curves"— which Dove, a Unilever brand, is using to promote itself among women put off by the idea that beauty is defined by tall, skinny supermodels.

Last year a survey for Dove, conducted among 3,200 women in 10 countries, found that 31 percent thought they looked "natural" and 29 percent "average" —compared to two percent which replied "beautiful." *AFP*

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La Mer's Deconstructed Water soothes hands while protecting and healing them. It delivers a skin-lightening complex along with marine proteins and botanicals that improve skin color and clarity to restore the hand's complexion. It diminishes unwanted discoloration and age spots. Powerful anti-oxidants help prevent damage. Available exclusively at Rustan's Makati.

Map exhibit marks Belgium's independence day

BELGIUM celebrates 175 years of independence. Marking the event is a map exhibit that opened yesterday. The exhibit highlights the scientific collaboration between Belgium and the Philippines in map-making. It is on view 8 a.m.-12noon, 1-5 p.m., Monday-Friday; and 8 a.m.-12 noon, Saturday, until March 31 at the Pardo de Tavera Room, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

On view is the historically important first map of the Philippines as a separate entity, "Insulae Philippinae/De Philippinen" of 1598 by Flemish mapmaker Petrus Kaerius. The map is the centerpiece of the exhibit. In addition, the decorative maps by Abraham Ortelius and Gerard Mercator are also on exhibit. Call 8451869.

GOINGS ON

WEEKEND ACTIVITIES. "AMCI Mountaineering Club Inc. celebrates its 22nd anniversary on Feb. 19 and 20, at Mengie's White Beach Resort, Talipanan, Puerto Galera. Dubbed "New Year, New Beginnings!", this year's anniversary has several activities in store such as climbing, biking, diving and a 3-man Adventure Race entitled "The Talipanan Adventure." Interested participants may register with Loree Villarama (09178588515), Iton Pomentil (0920-9262881) or Abby Yu (0920-9135227). Calling all AMCI members to come and join this fun-filled adventure weekend.

CONGRESS. The Center for Learning and Teaching Styles (CLTS) Philippines is hosting the First Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) Parents Congress 2005, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Feb. 19, at the Baguio City National High School Auditorium, Gov. Pack Road, Baguio City. Parents and teachers are participating in the one-day conference. Call 7294013/4018, 8893843/5004.

SHOW. Concert at the Park presents "Pilipinas Kong Mahal," 5 p.m., Feb. 20, at the Rizal Park Open-Air Auditorium, Manila. Admission is free. Call 5268163.

SALE. Stella E Stila Italia, an Italian style shop, offers up to 15 percent discounts on selected items until Feb. 28. The shop is at the G/F Plaza Building, Ayala Center, Makati.

MARATHON. Registration for the Philippine Marathon for the Pasig River on Feb. 27 is ongoing, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. at the Orchidarium and Butterfly Pavilion, Rizal Park Manila. Call 5276376/78.

FESTIVAL. Quezon City hosts Fiesta Pasiklab, a cultural and trade exposition and theme park that offers educational entertainment for the family. Kicking off the event is an attempt to set a Guinness world record for longest buntings on March 27.

COURSES. The Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation will hold a basic photo course on March 27. The advance course will be held March 19. Call 8435341/8137420.

LAUNCH. Designer Paola Suhonen launches Ivanahelsinki in the Philippines 6:30 p.m., March 31, at Shangri-La Edsa Mall. Call 8915011/15.

HOMECOMING. The St. Joseph's Academy Class 80 of Las Piñas will celebrate its silver jubilee June 25-26 at the SJA gGrounds and Vivere Hotel. Call 8725714/9378485.

PROMO. AVSurfer and AVID Sony Shop offer the Sony Handycam Price Down promo through HSBC card's deferred payment. The promo allows the purchase of select Sony Handycam models at marked down prices using HSBC credit card. Customers can pay in installment up to 24 months. The promo is ongoing until April 15 in all AV Surfer shops. Call 8431541/48.

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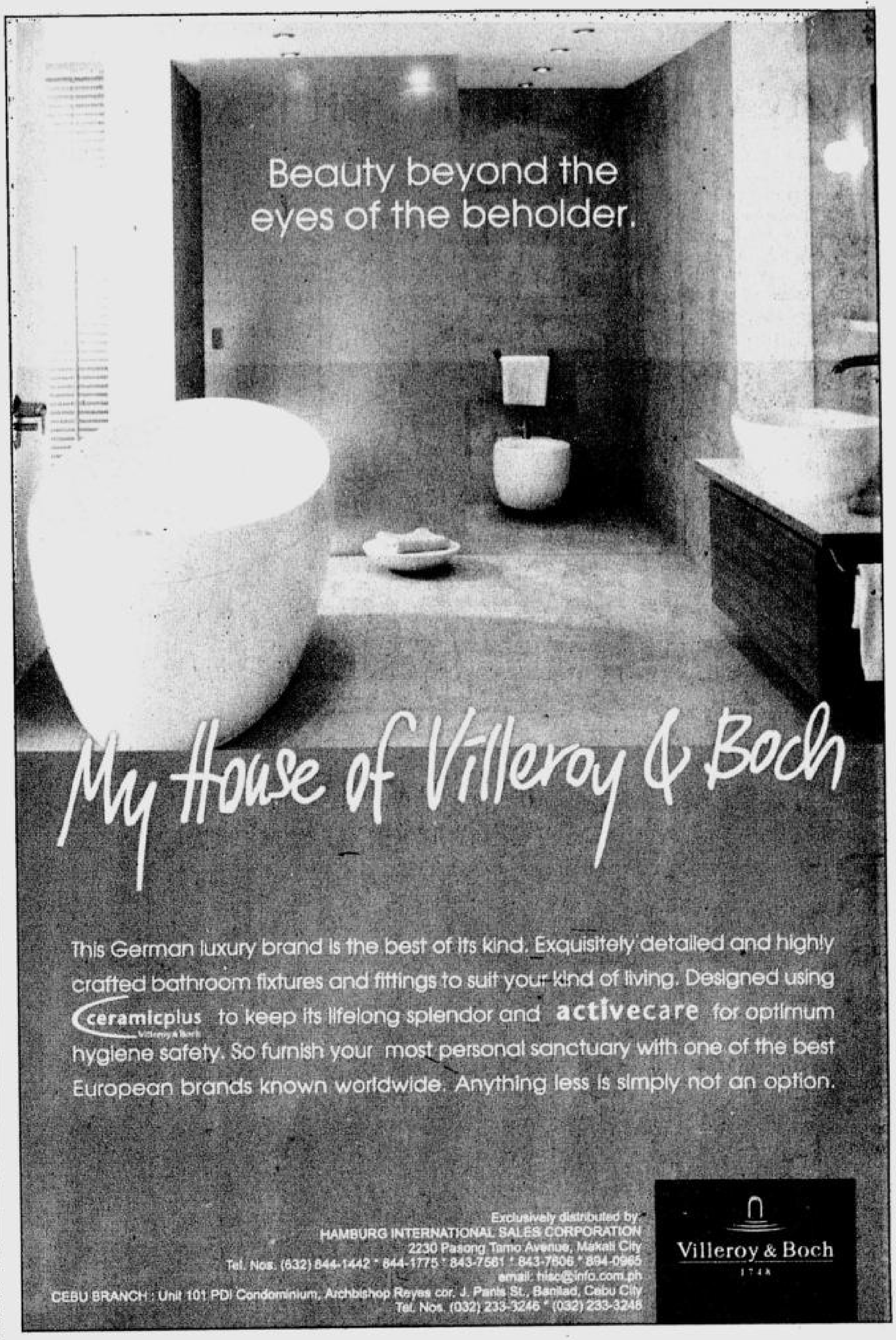
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Why virgin coconut oil is so in vogue

From page F1

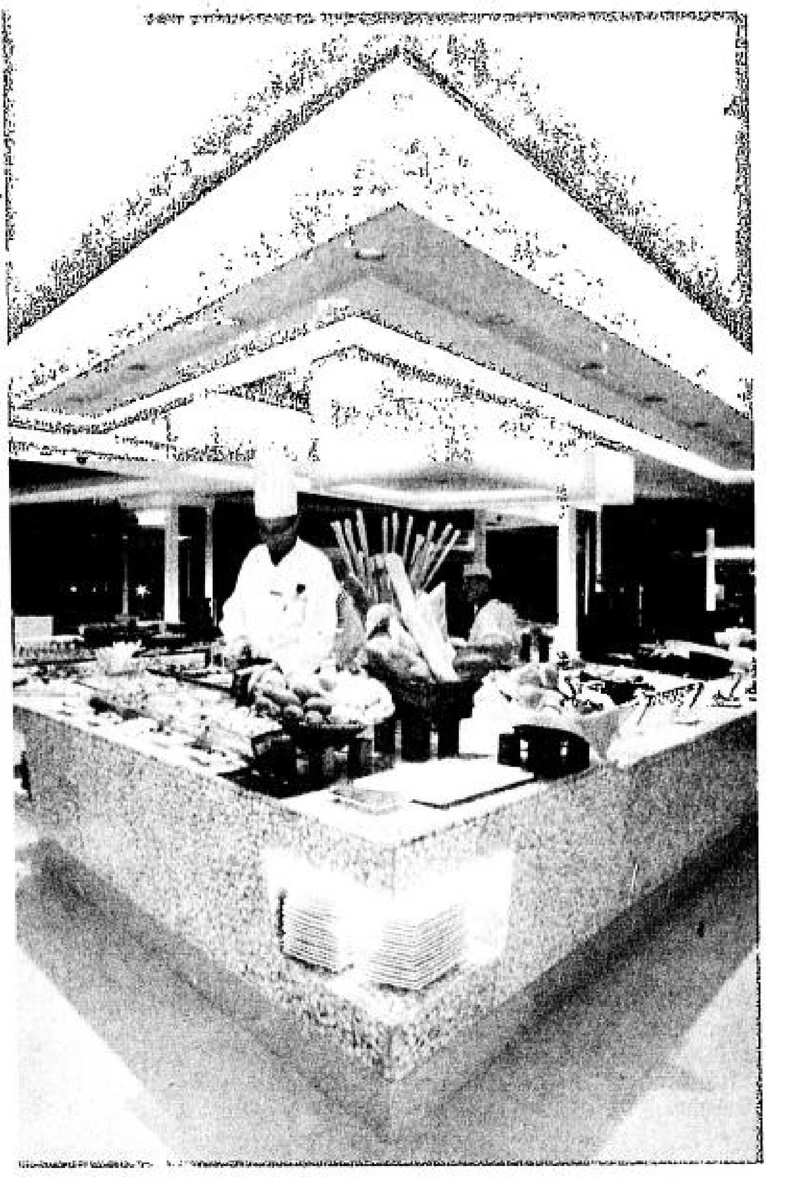
ter word (fat).

It also means that things have come full circle: Today's kids are rediscovering the uses of coconut oil, even after my generation shunned it, and my mom's generation couldn't live without it (from *gugo* to hair oil).

Today people drink virgin coconut oil because they believe it does wonders for the skin, energy, weight loss—for general health, in short. Extra virgin coconut oil from The Farm in Batangas has been a favorite gift the previous Christmases.

Over the weekend, I met an entrepreneur who's built a fortune exporting *ampalaya* tablets and virgin coconut oil. Beauty-conscious people have developed the habit of mixing one or two tablespoons of coco oil in hot water or herbal tea before a meal.

Now people say it's the oil-manufacturing industry lobby worldwide, through the years, that helped spread the general notion that coconut oil, like all fats, was bad for you and your waistline. That was how soybean, corn and other plant oils became the preferences over coconut oil—coco oil advocates claim.



INTERACTIVE lifestye design of Shangri-La Mactan's Tides restaurant

Vogue says the latest diet books are on coconut oil: "Three new releases with coconut oil as their centerpiece are promising to turn this tropical fruit from a nutritional pariah to a weight-loss superstar."

What's its secret? No secret really. It's just we're swinging from one extreme to, hopefully, a balance point and not the other extreme. After people dreaded fat in every imaginable form (e.g. bacon, even eggs), latest health journals are advancing the view that there are "good" fats and "bad" fats, just as there are "good" and "bad" cholesterols.

It is the monounsaturated variety found in olive oil that's believed to be healthy, and responsible for the rehabilitation of "good fat" foods. Avocados, smoked salmon, peanuts—Vogue names a few foods in what it calls the "fat forgiveness" atmosphere.

According to Vogue, the diet books attribute the slimming properties of coconut oil to the medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs), or fatty acids that metabolize "more quickly than the long-chain fatty acids in polyunsaturated fats like canola oil, and in monounsaturated fats like olive oil, so they're less likely to linger on your hips."

In truth, what all these findings and eating patterns are telling us is, use common sense in eating. It's common sense with a little updated knowledge here and there. And that means we need a little of everything—from fats to veggies to carbs.

It's when we go on an overdrive that waist buttons begin to snap. If we don't overindulge, we get to enjoy real food—and real body.

Designing buffet

Speaking of food, buffets are becoming a design statement. Huh? To explain—for some time now the battle of the buffets among five-star hotels is won or lost not only in cuisine, but also in the ambience and cutting-edge interior design. Mandarin Oriental's Paseo Uno set the trend—how interior design can round up the dining experience.

At Shangri-La Mactan, the Garden Café has just been redone into a beautiful place aptly called Tides. Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort, from the time it opened more than a decade ago, has always been my favorite spot. Just when you thought it couldn't get any better, it just did, with the opening of Tides.

In glass, wood and metal, Tides is sleek and contemporary enough to be global, yet exudes native chic through the use of Cebu's indigenous materials. Glass walls let the outdoors in. Lighting design focused on each food station makes the 321-seat restaurant look cozy.

The wood furniture by **Budji Layug** and Cebu Phil Veneer enhances thė warmth, juxtaposed against **Ann Pamintuan**'s signature wire sculptures and **Tes Pasola**'s artworks.

Designed by the HK firm CL3, Tides has another interesting design feature—the tabletops are made of river stones, executed by FLB Industries. **Bobby Castillo**'s glass items, such as check holder and glass dish receptables, accentuate the design.

Tides follows the interactive lifestyle concept so in vogue. The kitchens are right there among the diners, laid out as food islands or stations, so you have your food prepared in front of you.

Tides has interactive kitchens for *tapa*, noodle, cold appetizer, main/Asian food, juice bar, desserts. Its seafood station is mouthwatering—tiger prawns, crabs, mussels, oysters. It also has 15 kinds of desserts. Its chocolate fountain has Belgian chocolates.

Rajo Laurel designed the staff's uniforms, and the shoes were by a Carcar, Cebu, manufacturer.

Things will get even better at Shangri-La Mactan. In a month or two it will open what should be the chic-est spa in the region.

E-mail the author at thelma_ssanjuan@abs.pinoycentral.com

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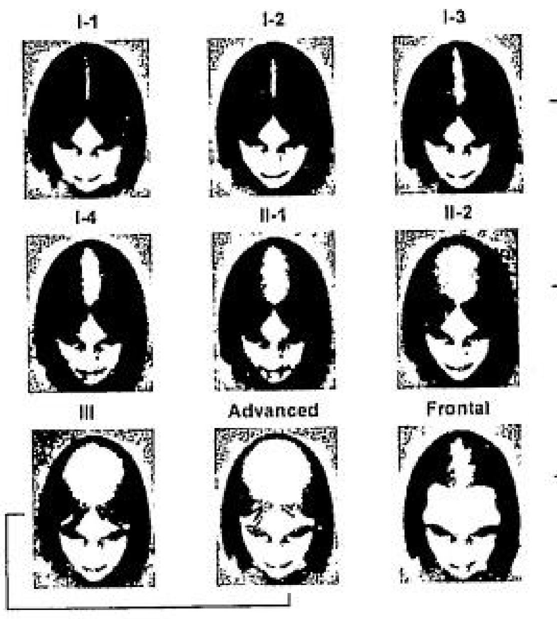
Are You Suffering From Hair Loss? Check These Signs.



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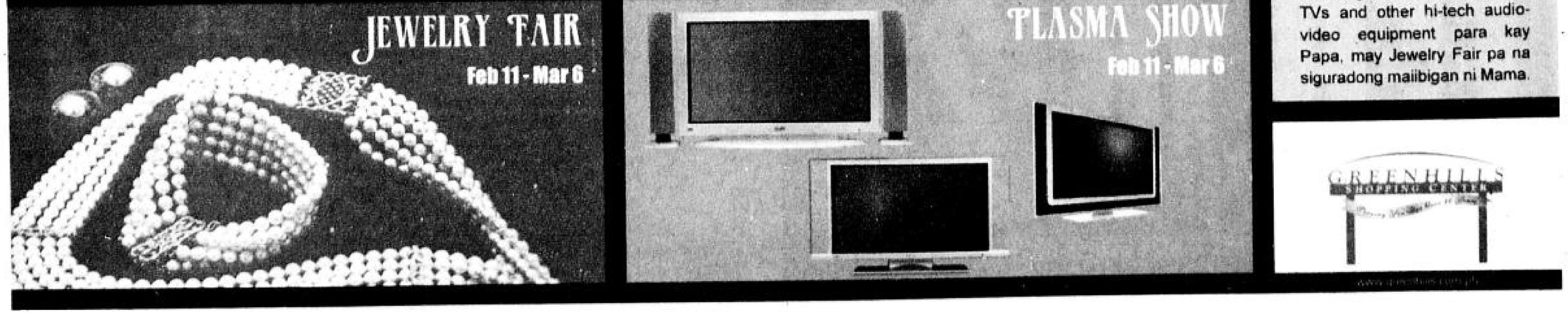

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